LANDOR S

IMAGINARY CONVERSATIONS

IMAGINARY CONVERSATIONS

BY WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR

WITH BIBLIOGRAPHICAL AND EXPLANATORY NOTES BY CHARLES G. CRUMP

IN SIX VOLUMES



FOURTH VOLUME

LONDON: PRINTED FOR J. M. DENT & CO.
AND PUBLISHED BY THEM AT ALDINE HOUSE, 29 & 30 BEDFORD STREET, W.C.
MDCCCCI



TABLE OF CONTENTS

DIALOGUES OF LITERARY MEN

IX	David Hume and John Home	pp 9 19
X	Alfieri and Salomon the Fiorentine Jew	19 35
XI	Rousseau and Malesherbes	35 51
XII	Joseph Scaliger and Montaigne	51 56
XIII	Boccaccio and Petrarca	56 66
XIV	Chaucer Boccaccio and Petrarca	66 108
XV	Barrow and Newton	108 159
XVI	Walton Cotton and Oldways	159 174
XVII	Machiavelli and Michel Angelo Buonarroti	174 193
XVIII	Southey and Landor	193 246
	Southey and Landor (*second conversation*)	246 302
XIX	Andrew Marvel and Bishop Parker	302 352
XX	Steele and Addison	352 355
XXI	La Fontaine and De la Rochefoucault	356 373
XXII	Melancthon and Calvin	374 384
XXIII	Galileo Milton and a Dominican	384 393
XXIV	Essex and Spenser	393 400
XXV	Archdeacon Hare and Walter Landor	401 432



DIALOGUES OF LITERARY MEN

DIALOGUES OF LITERARY MEN

IX DAVID HUME AND JOHN HOME [1]

Hume We Scotchmen, sir, are somewhat proud of our families and relationships: this is however a nationality which perhaps I should not have detected in myself if I had not been favored with the flattering present of your tragedy. Our names, as often happens, are spelled differently; but I yielded with no reluctance to the persuasion that we are, and not very distantly, of the same stock.

Home I hope, sir, our mountains will detain you among them some time, and I presume to promise you that you will find in Edinburgh a society as polished and literate as in Paris.

Hume As literate I can easily believe, my cousin, and per

[1 The date of this Conversation must have been about the summer of 1766, when Hume went to live in Edinburgh after his return from France. The Conversation reads as though Landor had supposed that Hume and Home had not met before. But in fact they had been for some time acquainted. Hume dedicated the 1758 edition of his Essays and Treatise to Home. Both men considered themselves a belonging to the same name, and in his will Hume pleasantly alludes to the difference of spelling as one of the two points on which alone the friends differed, the other was the precedence in merit of port or claret: see p. 10 of the Biography of Hume which Dr. Birkbeck Hill has concealed in his notes to The Letters of David Hume (Clarendon Press, 1888). The discussion in the Conversation on the borderland between Religion and Morality is a theme often referred to in Hume's essays. The particular instance of a brother and sister innocently wedded may have been derived from the essay entitled A Dialogue; the other instance may have been taken from a similar discussion in Boswell's Johnson, iii. p. 347, 8 (Clarendon Press, 1887). (Imag. Convers. ii. 1824, ii. 1826. Works, i. 1846. Works, iv. 1876.)]

haps as polished if you reason upon the ingredients of polish, but there is certainly much more amenity and urbanity at Paris than anywhere else in the world and people there are less likely to give and take offence All topics may be discussed without arrogance and superciliousness an atheist would see you worship a stool or light a candle at noon without a sneer at you and a bishop if you were well dressed and perfumed, would argue with you calmly and serenely though you doubted the whole Athanasian creed

Home So much the worse God forbid we should ever experience this lukewarmness in Scotland!

Hume God it appears has forbidden it, for which reason, to show my obedience and submission I live as much as possible in France, where at present God has forbidden no such thing

Home Religion, my dear sir can alone make men happy and keep them so

Hume Nothing is better calculated to make men happy than religion, if you will allow them to manage it according to their minds, in which case the strong men hunt down others until they can fold them, entrap them, or noose them Here however, let the discussion terminate Both of us have been in a cherry orchard, and have observed the advantages of the jacket hat and rattle

Home Our reformed religion does not authorize any line of conduct diverging from right reason we are commanded by it to speak the truth to all men

Hume Are you likewise commanded to hear it from all men?

Home Yes let it only be proved to be truth

Hume I doubt the observance you will not even let the fact be proved you resist the attempt you blockade the preliminaries Religion as you practise it in Scotland, in some cases is opposite to reason and subversive of happiness

Home In what instance?

Hume If you had a brother whose wife was unfaithful to him without his suspicion if he lived with her happily if he had children by her if others of which he was fond could be proved by you, and you only not to be his —what would you do?

Home Oh the harlot! we have none such here excepting the wife indeed (as we hear she is) of a little lame blear-eyed lieutenant,

brought with him from Sicily, and bearing an Etna of her own about her and truly no quiescent or intermittent one which Mungo Murray (the apprentice of Hector Abercrombie) tells me has engulfed half the dissolutes in the parish Of[2] the married men who visited her there was never one whose boot did not pinch him soon after, or the weather was no weather for corns and rheumatisms or he must even go to Glasgow to look after a bad debt the times being too ticklish to bear losses I run into this discourse, not fearing that another philosopher will, like Empedocles precipitate himself into the crater, but merely to warn you against the husband, whose intrepidity on entering the houses of strangers has caught many acute and wary folks After the first compliments he will lament to you that elegant and solid literature is more neglected in our days than it ever was He will entreat you to recommend him to your bookseller his own having been too much enriched by him had grown insolent It is desirable that it should be one who could advance three or four guineas not that he cares about the money but that it is always best to have a check upon these people You smile he has probably joined you in the street already, and found his way into your study, and requested of you *by the bye* a trifling loan as being the only person in the world with whom he could take such a liberty

Hume You seem to forget that I am but just arrived and never knew him

Home That is no impediment on the contrary, it is a reason the more A new face is as inviting to him as to the mosquitoes in America If you lend him a guinea to be rid of him, he will declare the next day that he borrowed it at your own request, and that he returned it the same evening

Hume Such men perhaps may have their reasons for being here but the woman must be as people say, like a fish out of water Again[3] to the question Come now, if you had a brother, I was supposing whose wife—

[[2] From Of to rheumatisms (3 lines) added in 2nd ed From 'or to losses (2 lines) added in 3rd ed From I to water (25 lines) added in 2nd ed]

[[3] First ed reads 'parish But if you had such a one *Home* &c]

Home Out upon her! should my brother cohabit with her? Should my nephews be defrauded of their patrimony by bastards?

Hume You would then destroy his happiness and his children's for, supposing that you preserved to them a scanty portion more of fortune (which you could not do), still the shame they would feel from their mother's infamy would much outweigh it.

Home I do not see clearly that this is a question of religion.

Hume All the momentous actions of religious men are referable to their religion, more or less nearly, all the social duties and surely these are implicated here are connected with it Suppose again that you knew a brother and sister who born in different countries, met at last ignorant of their affinity, and married

Home Poor blind, sinful creatures! God be merciful to them!

Hume I join you heartily in the prayer and would only add to it, Man be merciful to them also! Imagine them to have lived together ten years, to have a numerous and happy family to come and reside in your parish, and the attestation of their prior relationship to be made indubitable to you by some document which alone could establish and record it what would you do?

Home I would snap asunder the chain that the devil had ensnared them in, even if he stood before me I would implore God to pardon them, and to survey with an eye of mercy their unoffending barns

Hume And would not you be disposed to behold them with an eye of the same materials?

Home Could I leave them in mortal sin, a prey to the ensnarer of souls? No, I would rush between them as with a flaming sword I would rescue them by God's help from perdition

Hume What misery and consternation would this rescue bring with it!

Home They would call upon the hills to cover them, to crush and extinguish their shame

Hume Those who had lived together in love and innocence and felicity? A word spoken to them by their pastor brings them into irremediable guilt and anguish And you would do this?

Home The laws of God are above all other laws his ways are inscrutable thick darkness covers his throne

Hume My cousin you who have written so elegant and pathetic a tragedy cannot but have read the best contrived one in existence, the *Œdipus* of Sophocles

Home It has wrung my heart it has deluged my eyes with weeping

Hume Which would you rather do —cause and excite those sufferings or assuage and quell them?

Home Am I a Scotchman or an islander of the Red Sea that a question like this should be asked me?

Hume You would not then have given to Œdipus that information which drove him and Jocasta to despair?

Home[4] As a Christian and a minister of the gospel I am commanded to defy the devil, and to burst asunder the bonds of sin

Hume I am certain you would be greatly pained in doing it

Home I should never overcome the grief and anxiety so severe a duty would cause me

Hume You have now proved better than I could have done in twenty *Essays* that if morality is not religion neither is religion morality Either of them to be good (and the one must be and the other should be so) will produce good effects from the beginning to the end and be followed by no remorse or repentance

It would be presumptuous in me to quote the Bible to you who are so much more conversant in it yet I cannot refrain from repeating, for my own satisfaction, the beautiful sentence on holiness that all her ways are pleasantness and all her paths are peace It says not one or two paths but *all* for vice hath one or two passably pleasant in the season, if we could forget that when we would return, the road is difficult to find, and must be picked out in the dark Imagine anything in the semblance of a duty attended by regret and sorrow and be assured that holiness has no concern in it Admonition, it is true, is sometimes of such a nature from that of the irregularity it would correct, as to occasion a sigh or a blush to him who gives

[4 First ed reads *Home* To him no As &c]
[5 From It to effect (19 lines) added in nd ed]

it in this case, the sensation so manifested adds weight to the reproof and indemnifies the reprover He is happy to have done what from generosity and tenderness of heart he was sorry and slow to do and the person in whose behalf he acted must be degraded beneath the dignity of manhood if he feels less for himself than another has felt for him The regret is not at the performance of his duty but at the failure of its effect

To produce as much happiness as we can and to prevent as much misery is the proper aim and end of true morality and true religion Only give things their right direction [6] do but place and train them well and there is room to move easily and pleasantly in the midst of them

Home What! in the midst of vice and wickedness? And must we place and train those?

Hume There was a time when what is wine was not wine, when what is vinegar was not vinegar, when what is corruption was not corruption That which would turn into vice may not only not turn into it but may, by discreet and attentive management, become the ground work of virtue A little watchfulness over ourselves will save us a great deal of watchfulness over others and will permit the kindliest of religions to drop her inconvenient and unseemly talk of enmity and strife cuirasses and breastplates battles and exterminations

Home These carnal terms are frequent in the books of the Old Testament.

Hume Because the books of the Old Testament were written when the world was much more barbarous and ferocious than it is at present and legislators must accommodate their language to the customs and manners of the country

Home Apparently you would rather abolish the forcible expressions of our pious reformers, than the abominations at which their souls revolted I am afraid you would hesitate as little to demolish kirks as convents to drive out ministers as monks

Hume I would let ministers and their kirks alone I would abolish monasteries but gradually and humanely, and not until I had discovered how and where the studious and pious could

[6 First ed reads ' direction ther is room Do but train and place them well *Hom* What wickedness *Hume* &c]

spend their time better I hold religion in the light of a medal which has contracted rust from ages This rust seems to have been its preserver for many centuries but after some few more will certainly be its consumer and leave no vestige of effigy or superscription behind it should be detached carefully and patiently not ignorantly and rudely scoured off Happiness may be taken away from many with the design of communicating it to more but that which is a grateful and refreshing odor in a limited space would be none whatever in a larger that which is comfortable warmth to the domestic circle would not awaken the chirping of a cricket, or stimulate the flight of a butterfly, in the forest, that which satisfies a hundred poor monks would if thrown open to society at large contribute not an atom to its benefit and emolument Placid tempers regulated habitudes consolatory visitations are suppressed and destroyed and nothing rises from their ruins Better let the cell be standing than level it only for the thorn and nettle

Home What good do these idlers with their cords and wallets or if you please, with their regularities?

Hume These have their value at least to the possessor and the few about him Ask rather what is the worth of his abode to the prince or to the public? Who is the wiser for his cowl the warmer for his frock, the more contented for his cloister when they are taken from him? Monks, it is true are only as stars that shine upon the desert, but tell me I beseech you who caused such a desert in the moral world, and who rendered so faint a light, in some of its periods a blessing? Ignorant rulers, must be the answer, and inhuman laws. They should cease to exist some time before their antidotes however ill compounded are cast away

If we had lived seven or eight centuries ago John Home would probably have been saying Mass at the altar and David Hume, fatter and lazier would have been pursuing his theological studies in the convent We are so much the creatures of times and seasons, so modified and fashioned by them that the very plants upon the wall if they were as sensible as some suppose them to be, would laugh at us

Home Fantastic forms and ceremonies are rather what the philosopher will reprehend Strip away these, reduce things

to their primitive state of purity and holiness, and nothing can alter or shake us clinging as we should to the anchor of faith

Hume People clung to it long ago, but many lost their grasp benumbed by holding too tightly The Church of Scotland brings close together the objects of veneration and abhorrence The evil principle or devil was in my opinion, hardly worth the expense of his voyage from Persia but, since you have him you seem resolved to treat him nobly, hating him, defying him, and fearing him nevertheless I would not however, place him so very near the Creator let his pretensions from custom and precedent, be what they may

Home He is always marring the fair works of our Heavenly Father in this labor is his only proximity

Hume You represent him as spurring men on to wickedness from no other motive than the pleasure he experiences in rendering them miserable

Home He has no other excepting his inveterate spite and malice against God, from which indeed to speak more properly, this desire originates

Hume Has he lost his wits, as well as his station, that he fancies he can render God unhappy by being spiteful and malicious? You wrong him greatly but you wrong God more For in all Satan's attempts to seduce men into wickedness, he leaves every one his free will either to resist or yield but the Heavenly Father, as you would represent him, predestines the greater part of mankind to everlasting pains and torments antecedently to corruption or temptation There is no impiety in asking you which is the worst for impiety most certainly does not consist in setting men right on what is demonstrable in their religion, nor in proving to them that God is greater and better than with all their zeal for him, they have ever thought him

Home This is to confound religion with philosophy, the source of nearly every evil in conduct and of every error in ethics.

Hume Religion is the eldest sister of Philosophy on whatever subjects they may differ, it is unbecoming in either to quarrel, and most so about their inheritance

[7 First ed reads of every evil and of every error]

Home And have you nothing, sir, to say against the pomps and vanities of other worships that you should assail the institutions of your native country? To fear God I must suppose then is less meritorious than to build steeples and embroider surplices, and compose chants and blow the bellows of organs.

Hume My dear sir, it is not because God is delighted with hymns and instruments of music or prefers bass to tenor or tenor to bass or Handel to Giles Halloway, that nations throng to celebrate in their churches his power and his beneficence it is not that Inigo Jones or Christopher Wren could erect to him a habitation more worthy of his presence than the humblest cottage on the loneliest moor it is that the best feelings the highest faculties the greatest wealth should be displayed and exercised in the patrimonial palace of every family united For such are churches both to the rich and poor

Home Your hand David! Pardon me sir the sentiment carried me beyond custom for it recalled to me the moments of blissful enthusiasm when I was writing my tragedy and charmed me the more as coming from you

Hume I explain the causes of things and leave them

Home Go on sir pray go on for here we can walk together Suppose that God never heard us, never cared for us do those care for you or hear you whose exploits you celebrate at public dinners —our Wallaces and Bruces? Yet are not we thence the braver the more generous the more grateful?

Hume I do not see clearly how the more grateful but I would not analyze by reducing to a cinder a lofty sentiment

Home Surely[a] we are grateful for the benefits our illustrious patriots have conferred on us and every act of gratitude is rewarded by reproduction Justice is often pale and melancholy but Gratitude her daughter is constantly in the flow of spirits and the bloom of loveliness You call out to her when you fancy she is passing you want her for your dependants your domestics, your friends, your children The ancients, as you know, habitually asked their gods and goddesses by which of their names it was most agreeable to them to be invoked now let Gratitude be, what for the play of our fancy we have just

[a From Surely to us (2 lines) added in 3rd ed]

imagined her a sentient living power I cannot think of any name more likely to be pleasing to her than Religion The simplest breast often holds more reason in it than it knows of, and more than Philosophy looks for or suspects We almost as frequently despise what is not despicable as we admire and reverence what is No nation in the world was ever so enlightened and in all parts and qualities so civilized, as the Scotch Why would you shake or unsettle or disturb those principles which have rendered us peaceable and contented?

Hume I would not by any means

Home Many of your writings have evidently such a tendency

Hume Those of my writings to which you refer will be read by no nation a few speculative men will take them, but none will be rendered more gloomy more dissatisfied, or more unsocial by them Rarely will you find one who five minutes together can fix his mind even on the surface some new tune, some idle project, some light thought, some impracticable wish, will generally run, like the dazzling haze of summer on the dry heath betwixt them and the reader A bagpipe will swallow them up, a strathspey will dissipate them, or Romance with the death rattle in her throat will drive them away into dark staircases and charnel houses

You and I in the course of our conversation have been at variance as much as discreet and honest men ought to be each knows that the other thinks differently from him, yet each esteems the other I cannot but smile when I reflect that a few paces a glass of wine, a cup of tea conciliate those whom Wisdom would keep asunder

Home No wonder you scoff emphatically as you pronounce the word *wisdom*

Hume If men would permit their minds like their children to associate freely together, if they would agree to meet one another with smiles and frankness instead of suspicion and defiance, the common stock of intelligence and of happiness would be centupled Probably those two men who hate each other most, and whose best husbandry is to sow burs and thistles in each other's path, would, if they had ever met and conversed familiarly, have been ardent and inseparable friends. The

minister who may order my book to be burned to morrow by the hangman, if I by any accident had been seated yesterday by his side at dinner might perhaps in another fortnight recommend me to his master for a man of such gravity and understanding as to be worthy of being a privy councillor, and might conduct me to the treasury bench

X ALFIERI AND SALOMON THE FLORENTINE JEW [1]

Alfieri Let us walk to the window, signor Salomon And now instead of the silly simpering compliments repeated at introductions let me assure you that you are the only man in Florence with whom I would willingly exchange a salutation

Salomon I must think myself highly flattered signor Conte having always heard that you are not only the greatest democrat but also the greatest aristocrat, in Europe

Alfieri These two things however opposite which you smile would indicate are not so irreconcilable as you imagine Let [2] us first understand the words and then talk about them The democrat is he who wishes the people to have a due share in the government and this share if you please shall be the principal one The aristocrat of our days is contented with no actual share in it but if a man of family is conscious of his dignity, and resentful that another has invaded it he may be and is universally, called an aristocrat The principal difference is that one carries outward what the other carries inward I am thought an aristocrat by the Florentines for conversing with few

[1 I have failed to discover who Salomon was or whether there was any such person There is no mention of him in Alfieri's autobiography For Alfieri see the Conversation between *Alfieri and Metastasio* where Landor has given a rather more detailed picture of a poet and aristocrat whose life suggests the name of Byron irresistibly It is worth noting that in the autobiography Alfieri speaks of the sonnet of Cassiani quoted on p 33 as a beautiful sonnet and that he wrote a companion sonnet on the carrying away of Ganymede in imitation of it (Imag Convers II 1824 II 1826 Works II 1846 Works IV 1876)]

[2 From Let to Siena (16 lines) added in 2nd ed]

people, and for changing my shirt and shaving my beard on other days than festivals which the most aristocratical of them never do considering it no doubt, as an excess I am however, from my soul a republican if prudence and modesty will authorize any man to call himself so, and this, I trust, I have demonstrated in the most valuable of my works the *Treatise on Tyranny* and the *Dialogue* with my friend at Siena The aristocratical part of me if part of me it must be called hangs loose and keeps off insects I see no aristocracy in the children of sharpers from behind the counter nor, placing the matter in the most favourable point of view in the descendants of free citizens who accepted from any vile enslaver—French Spanish German, or priest or monk [3] (represented with a piece of buffoonery, like a beehive on his head and a picklock key at his girdle)—the titles of counts and marquises In Piedmont the matter is different we must either have been the rabble or their lords, we were military and we return over the populace the same rank and spirit as our ancestors held over the soldiery But [4] we are as prone to slavery as they were averse and reluctant.

Under the best of princes we are children all our lives Under the worse we are infinitely more degraded than the wretches who are reduced to their servitude by war or even by crimes begging our master to take away from us the advantages of our education and of our strength in mind and body Is this picture overcharged?

Salomon Not with bright colors certainly

Alfieri What think you then if we are threatened with hell by those who take away earth from us, and scourge and imprison and torture us?

Salomon Hell is a very indifferent hospital for those who are thrust into it with broken bones It is hard indeed, if they who lame you will not let you limp Indeed I do hear, signor Conte that the churchmen call you an atheist and a leveller

Alfieri So, during the plague at Milan, if a man walked upright in the midst of it, and without a sore about him, he was a devil or an *anointer* it was a crime and a curse not to be

[3 First ed reads monk with a honeycomb on his head and a key," &c Second ed reads with a hive on his head and a key &c]

[4 From But to smoother (22 lines) added in 3rd ed]

infected But, signor Salomon, a poet never can be an atheist, nor can a gentleman be a leveller For my part I would rather walk alone in a rugged path than with the many in a smoother

Salomon Signor Conte I have heard of levellers, but I have never seen one all are disposed to level down, but nobody to level up As for nobility, there is none in Europe beside the Venetian Nobility must be self constituted and independent the free alone are noble slavery like death levels all The English comes nearest to the Venetian they are independent, but want the main characteristic, the *self constituted* You have been in England signor Conte and can judge of them better than I can

Alfieri England, as you know is governed by Pitt the most insidious of her demagogues and the most hostile to aristocracy Jealous of power and distrustful of the people that raised him to it, he enriches and attaches to him the commercial part of the nation by the most wasteful prodigality both in finance and war and he loosens from the landed the chief proprietors by raising them to the peerage Nearly a third of the lords have been created by him, and prove themselves devotedly his creatures This Empusa puts his ass's foot on the French and his iron one on the English He possesses not the advantage possessed by insects, which if they see but one inch before them see that inch distinctly He[6] knows not that the machine which runs on so briskly will fall to pieces the moment it stops He will indeed carry his point in debasing the aristocracy but he will equally debase the people Undivided power he will continue to enjoy but, after his death, none will be able to say from any visible proof or appearance, *How glorious a people did he govern!* He will have changed its character in all ranks and conditions After this it is little to say that he will have exalted its rival who without his interposition, would have sunk under distress

[5 Note in 1st and 2nd eds reads All this refers to a state of things belonging to history but past away from us it being evident that nothing can be more respectable than the present English ministry Alfieri spoke scornfully and disdainfully because he was generally ill received in England for although he was at that time the greatest man in Europe he was not acknowledged or known to be so From this to 'English" (2 lines) added in nd ed]

[6 From He to stops (2 lines) added in 2nd ed]

and crime But interposition was necessary to his aggrandizement, enabling him to distribute in twenty years if he should live so long, more wealth among his friends and partisans than has been squandered by the uncontrolled profusion of French monarchs, from the first Louis to the last

Salomon How happens it that England richer and more powerful than other States should still contain fewer nobles?

Alfieri The greater part of the English nobility has neither power nor title Even those who are noble by right of possession the hereditary lords of manors with large estates attached to them, claim no titles at home or abroad Hence in all foreign countries the English gentleman is placed below his rank, which naturally and necessarily is far higher than that of your slipshod counts and lottery-office marquises whose gamekeepers, with their high plumes cocked hats and hilts of rapiers have no other occupation than to stand behind the carriage if the rotten plank will bear them whose game is the wren and redbreast, and whose beat is across the market.

Menestrier, who both as a Frenchman and as a Jesuit speaks contemptuously of English nobility admits the gentlemen to this dignity Their property their information their political influence, and their moral character place them beyond measure above the titularies of our country be the rank what it may, and it is a remarkable proof of moderation in some and of contemptuousness in others that they do not openly claim from their king, or assume without such intervention the titles arising from landed wealth, which conciliate the attention and civility of every class, and indeed of every individual abroad

It is among those who stand between the peerage and the people that there exists a greater mass of virtue and of wisdom than in the rest of Europe Much of their dignified simplicity may be attributed to the plainness of their religion, and, what will always be imitated to the decorous life of their king, for whatever may be the defects of either, if we compare them with others round us, they are excellent.

Salomon A young religion jumps upon the shoulders of an older one, and soon becomes like her by mockery of her tricks, her cant and her decrepitude Meanwhile the old one shakes with indignation, and swears there is neither relationship nor

likeness Was there ever a religion in the world that was not the true religion or was there ever a king that was not the best of kings?

Alfieri In the latter case we must have arrived nigh perfection since it is evident from the authority of the gravest men—theologians presidents, judges corporations universities senates—that every prince is better than his father, of blessed memory now with God If they continue to rise thus transcendently earth in a little time will be incapable of holding them and higher heavens must be raised upon the highest heavens for their reception The lumber of our Italian courts the most crazy part of which is that which rests upon a red cushion in a gilt chair with stars and sheep and crosses dangling from it, must be approached as Artaxerxes and Domitian These automatons we are told nevertheless use very condescending Poor fools who tell us it! ignorant that where on one side is condescension, on the other side must be baseness The rascals have ruined my physiognomy I wear an habitual sneer upon my face, God confound them for it!

Salomon This temper or constitution of mind I am afraid may do injury to your works

Alfieri Surely not to all my satire at least must be the better for it.

Salomon I think differently No satire can be excellent where displeasure is expressed with acrimony and vehemence When satire ceases to smile, it should be momentarily and for the purpose of inculcating a moral Juvenal is hardly more a satirist than Lucan he is indeed a vigorous and bold declaimer but he stamps too often, and splashes up too much filth We Italians have no delicacy in wit we have indeed no conception of it, we fancy we must be weak if we are not offensive The scream of Pulcinello is imitated more easily than the masterly strokes of Plautus or the sly insinuations of Catullus and of Flaccus

Alfieri We are the least witty of men because we are the most trifling

Salomon You would persuade me then that to be witty one must be grave this is surely a contradiction

Alfieri I would persuade you only that banter, pun, and

quibble are the properties of light men and shallow capacities, that genuine humor and true wit require a sound and capacious mind which is always a grave one Contemptuousness is not incompatible with them worthless is that man who feels no contempt for the worthless and weak who treats their emptiness as a thing of weight At first it may seem a paradox, but it is perfectly true that the gravest nations have been the wittiest; and in those nations some of the gravest men In England Swift and Addison in Spain Cervantes. Rabelais and La Fontaine are recorded by their countrymen to have been *reveurs* Few men have been graver than Pascal few have been wittier[7]

Salomon It is indeed a remarkable thing that such should be the case among the moderns it does not appear to have been so among the ancients

Alfieri I differ from you M Salomon When we turn toward the Athenians we find many comic writers but few facetious Menander if we may judge from his fragments, had less humor than Socrates.[8] Quintilian says of Demosthenes, non displicuisse illi jocos sed non contigisse In this he was less fortunate than Phocion and Cicero Facility in making men smile gives a natural air to a great orator and adds thereby much effect to what he says, provided it come discreetly It is in him somewhat like affability in a prince, excellent if used with caution Every one must have perceived how frequently those are brought over by a touch of humor who have resisted the force of argument and entreaty Cicero thought in this manner on wit Writing to his brother, he mentions a letter from him 'Aristophanico modo valde mehercule et suavem et gravem Among the Romans the gravest nation after the English, I think Cicero and Catullus were the wittiest. Cicero from his habits of life and studies must have been grave, Catullus we may believe to have been so from his being tender and impassioned in the more serious part of his poetry

Salomon This is to me no proof, for the most tender and impassioned of all poets is Shakspeare, who certainly was him-

[7 From Few to wittier added in 2nd ed]
[8 First ed reads Socrates and Aristophanes himself than Photion. From Quintilian to entreaty appears as a note in 1st ed]

self far removed from gravity, however much of it he imparted to some personages of his drama

Alfieri That Shakspeare was gay and pleasurable in conversation I can easily admit for there never was a mind at once so plastic and so pliant but, without much gravity, could there have been that potency and comprehensiveness of thought that depth of feeling that creation of imperishable ideas that sojourn in the souls of other men? He was amused in his workshop such was society But when he left it, he meditated intensely upon those limbs and muscles on which he was about to bestow new action grace and majesty and so great an intensity of meditation must have strongly impressed his whole character

Salomon You will however allow that we have no proof of gravity in Horace or Plautus

Alfieri On the contrary I think we have many Horace like all the pusillanimous, was malignant like all courtiers he yielded to the temper of his masters His lighter touches were agreeable less to his own nature than to the nature of Augustus and Mecænas both of them fond of trifling but in his *Odes* and his *Discourses* there is more of gravity than of gayety That he was libidinous is no proof that he was playful for often such men are even melancholic

Plautus [9] rich in language rich in reflection rich in character is oftener graver than could have suited the inclinations of a coarse and tumultuous populace What but the strong bent of his nature could have moved him to it? The English display in equal share of facetiousness and of *humor* (as they call it) in their comedies

Salomon I do not understand the distinction

Alfieri Nor indeed is it well understood by many of their best authors It is no uncommon thing to hear, "*He has humor rather than wit* Here the expression can only mean *pleasantry* for whoever has humor has wit although it does not follow that whoever has wit has humor Humor is wit appertaining to character and indulges in breadth of drollery rather

[9 First ed reads Plautus who appears to me to have been by far the first of comic writers, rich &c Four lines below from The English to 'generic (18 lines) added in 3rd ed First and nd eds read "*Salomon* The French are witty *Alfi* This I concede &c]

than in play and brilliancy of point Wit vibrates and spurts humor springs up exuberantly as from a fountain, and runs on In Congreve you wonder what he will say next in Addison you repose on what is said listening with assured expectation of something congenial and pertinent The French have little humor because they have little character they excel all nations in wit because of their levity and sharpness The personages on their theatre are generic

Salomon You do allow that they are facetious from you no small concession

Alfieri This I do concede to them and no person will accuse me of partiality in their favor Not only are they witty but when they discover a witty thing they value it so highly that they reserve it for the noblest purposes such as tragedies, sermons, and funeral orations Whenever a king of theirs is inaugurated at Rheims a string of witticisms is prepared for him during his whole reign regularly as the civil list regularly as menageries, oratories, orangeries wife confessor waterworks, fireworks, gardens, parks forests, and chases Sometimes one is put into his mouth when he is too empty, sometimes when he is too full, but he always hath his due portion take it when or how he may A decent one somewhat less indeed than that of their sovereign is reserved for the princes of the blood the greater part of which is usually packed up with their camp equipage, and I have seen a label to a *bon mot*, on which was written "Brillant comme la reponse de Henri IV quand, —but the occasion had not been invented

We Italians sometimes fall into what, if you will not call it witticism you may call the plasma of witticism, by mere mistake, and against our genius [10] A blunder by its very stumbling, is often carried a little beyond what was aimed at, and falls upon something which, if it be not wit, is invested with its powers

[10 First ed reads genius Reading in a gazette Hier le roi a travaillé avec ses ministres and knowing the man's character a young courtier cried innocently What! his most Christian majesty condescends to dine with his subjects and they joke upon it! In another, Les enfans de France se promenent en carosse &c his sister enquired of her confessor how many there were of them he answered Twenty four or twenty five millions A blunder &c]

Salomon I have had opportunities to observe the obtuseness of the Tuscans in particular on these matters Lately I lent my Molière to a man of talents and when he returned the volumes, I asked him how he liked them *Per Bacco* he exclaimed "the names are very comical —Sguanarelli and those others They who have no wit of their own are ignorant of it when it occurs, mistake it and misapply it A sailor found upon the shore a piece of amber he carried it home and, as he was fond of fiddling began to rub it across the strings of his violin It would not answer He then broke some pieces off boiled them in blacking and found to his surprise and disquiet that it gave no fresh lustre to the shoe leather What are you about? cried a messmate Smell it man it is amber 'The devil take it, cried the finder "I fancied it was resin and he threw it into the sea We despise what we cannot use

Alfieri Your observations on Italian wit are correct Even our comedies are declamatory long speeches and inverted sentences overlay and stifle the elasticity of humor The great Machiavelli is whatever M de Voltaire may assert to the contrary, a coarse comedian, hardly better than the cardinal Bibiena poisoned by the Holiness of our Lord Pope Leo for wearying him with wit *

* If Cardinal Bibiena was poisoned by Leo an opinion to which the profligacy of the pope gave rise and the malignity of men reception it should be recorded in justice to his Holiness that he wished to protect the family We find among the letters of Bembo a very beautiful and energetic one written in the name of Leo to Francis I relating to Bibiena There is something not unsuspicious in the mode of expression where he repeats that although Bibiena thinks himself sure of dying *th appea t b n mm d lang f st sho ld l app* &c

'Cum Bernardus Bibiena cardinalis aliquot jam dies ex *i mach* laboret *magisque timor quodam uo q am mo b v rg i* brevi se exi timet mori turum Quanquam enim nihildum sane video quo quidem de illius vitâ sit omnino magnopere timendum Si id accidat quod ip e *suspicatur* tua in illum munificentia tuumque præclarum munus non *statim* neque una cum ip us vita extinguatur præsertim cum ei tam breve temporis spatium illo ipso tuo munere frui licuerit ut ante amissum videri possit quam quale quantumve fuerit percipi ab illo cognoscive potuerit Ut ipse si moriendum ei sit &c

The Italians are too credulous on poison which at one period was almost a natural death among them Englishmen were shocked at the

Salomon His Holiness took afterward a stirrup-cup of the same brewery and never had committed the same offence, poor man! I [11] should have thought the opinion of Voltaire less erroneous on wit although it carries no weight with it on poetry or harmony

Alfieri It is absurd to argue with a Frenchman on any thing relating to either The Spaniards have no palate, the Italians no scent, the French no ear Garlic and grease and the most nauseous of pulse are the favorite cheer of the Spaniard, the

confidence with which they asserted it of two personages who occupied in the world a rank and interest due to neither and one of whom died in England the other in Elba

The last words of the letter are ready to make us unbelievers of Leo's guilt in this business What exquisite language! what expressions of zeal and sincerity!

Quæ quidem omnia non tam propterea colligo quod non illud unum existimem apud te plurimum valiturum amorem scilicet erga illum tuum itemque incredibilem ipsius in te cultum quod initio dixi sed ut mihi ipsi qui id magnopere cupio satisfaciam ne perfamiliari ac pernecessario meo mihique charissimo ac suavissimo atque in omni vitæ munere probatissimo mea benevolentia meusque amor hoc extremo ejus vitæ tempore si hoc extremum erit plane defuisse videatur

In the tenth book of these epistle there is one addressed to the Cardinal by which the Church of Loretto is placed under his care with every rank of friendship and partiality

De tua enim in Divam pietate in rem Romanam studio in me autem cui quidem familiæque meæ omnia pæne usque a puero summæ cum integritatis et fidei tum vero curæ atque diligentiæ egregia atque præclara officia præstiti tibi perveteri observantia voluntateque admonitus nihil est rerum omnium quod tibi recte mandeti credique posse non existimem

It is not in human nature that a man ever capable of these feelings toward any one should poison him when no powerful interest or deep revenge was to be gratified the opinion nevertheless has prevailed and it may be attributed to a writer not altogether free from malignity, a scorner of popes and princes and especially hostile to the Mediceau family Paolo Giovio says that Bibiena was poisoned in a *fresh egg* The sixteenth century was *the age of poison* Bibiena was poisoned, we may believe not however by Leo who loved him as being his preceptor Leo sent him into France to persuade Francis I to enter into a league against the Turks The object of this league was to divert both him and Charles V from Italy and to give the preponderating power in it to the family of Medici

[11 From 'I' to harmony (3 lines) added in 3rd ed From '*Alfieri*' to writers (26 lines) added in 2nd ed]

olfactory nerves of the Italian endure any thing but odoriferous flowers and essences and no sounds but soft ones offend the Frenchman

Salomon And yet several of the French prose writers are more harmonious than the best of ours

Alfieri In the construction of their sentences they have obtained from study what sensibility has denied them Rousseau is an exception he beside is the only musical composer that ever had a tolerable ear for prose Music is both sunshine and irrigation to the mind, but when it occupies and covers it too long it debilitates and corrupts it Sometimes I have absorbed music so totally that nothing was left of it in its own form my ear detained none of the notes none of the melody they went into the heart immediately mingled with the spirit and lost themselves among the operations of the fancy whose finest and most recondite springs they put simultaneously and vigorously in motion Rousseau[1] kept it subordinate which must always be done with music as well as with musicians He excels all the moderns in the harmony of his periods

Salomon I have heard it reported that you prefer Pascal

Alfieri Certainly on the whole I consider him the most perfect of writers

Salomon[13] Many other of the French theologians are said to be highly eloquent but theology is without attraction for me so that I am ignorant of their merit

Alfieri How deplorable that whatever is excellent in modern style should with hardly any deduction be displayed by fanaticism! I am little more interested by the contentions of Fenelon and Bossuet than I am by the *Cristo Bianco* and *Cristo Nero* of the Neapolitan rabble—two processional idols you must know, which are regularly carried home with broken heads

Salomon I dare not hazard a word upon these worthies

[12 Second ed reads Rousseau is the only composer of music on the modern system who could write one sentence of poetry or prose worth reading He kept it periods Bossuet comes next Salomon &c]

[13 From *Salomon* to *Alfieri* (4 lines) added in 3rd ed Second ed reads How deplorable contentions of such men as Pascal and Bossuet with their opponents than I am &c From How to details (78 lines) added in 2nd ed]

You who had a Catholic father and whose blood is truly Christian, may ridicule them with impunity the people who would laugh with you would stone me Our incurable diarrhœa of words should not always make you take the other side of the road Machiavelli is admirable for precision of style, no less than for acuteness of argument and depth of thought. Guicciardini if his sentences were properly stopped would be found in general both full and concise, whatever may be asserted to the contrary by the fastidious and inattentive

Alfieri I have often thought the same. As for Machiavelli I would rather have written his *Discourses on the first Decade of Livius* (in which nothing is amiss but the title) than all the volumes prose and poetry of Voltaire If the *Florentine History* is not so interesting as the more general one of Guicciardini there is the same reason for it as there is that the *Batrachomyomachia* is not so interesting as the *Iliad*

Salomon Certainly no race of men upon earth ever was so unwarlike, so indifferent to national dignity and to personal honor, as the Florentines are now yet in former days a certain pride, arising from a resemblance in their government to that of Athens, excited a vivifying desire of approximation where no danger or loss accompanied it and Genius was no less confident of his security than of his power Look from the window That cottage on the declivity was Dante's that square and large mansion, with a circular garden before it elevated artificially, was the first scene of Boccaccio's *Decameron* A boy might stand at an equal distance between them and break the windows of each with his sling What idle fabricator of crazy systems will tell me that climate is the creator of genius? The climate of Austria is more regular and more temperate than ours, which I am inclined to believe is the most variable in the whole universe, subject, as you have perceived to heavy fogs for two months in winter, and to a stifling heat, concentrated within the hills, for five more Yet a single man of genius hath never appeared in the whole extent of Austria an extent several thousand times greater than our city and this very street has given birth to fifty

Alfieri Since the destruction of the republic Florence has produced only one great man, Galileo, and abandoned him to

every indignity that fanaticism and despotism could invent Extraordinary men like the stones that are formed in the higher regions of the air fall upon the earth only to be broken and cast into the furnace The precursor of Newton lived in the deserts of the moral world drank water and ate locusts and wild honey It was fortunate that his head also was not lopped off had a singer asked it instead of a dancer it would have been

Salomon In fact it was for the fruits of it were shaken down and thrown away he was forbidden to publish the most important of his discoveries and the better part of his manuscripts was burned after his death

Alfieri Yes, signor Salomon those things may rather be called our heads than this knob above the shoulder, of which (as matters stand) we are rather the porters than the proprietors, and which is really the joint concern of barber and dentist.

Salomon Our thoughts if they may not rest at home may wander freely Delighting in the remoter glories of my native city, I forget at times its humiliation and ignominy A town so little that the voice of a cabbage girl in the midst of it may be heard at the extremities reared within three centuries a greater number of citizens illustrious for their genius than all the remainder of the continent (excepting her sister Athens) in six thousand years My ignorance of the Greek forbids me to compare our Dante with Homer The propriety and force of language and the harmony of verse in the glorious Grecian are quite lost to me Dante had not only to compose a poem but in great part a language Fantastical as the plan of his poem is and, I will add uninteresting and uninviting unimportant, mean contemptible, as are nine tenths of his characters and his details, and [14] wearisome as is the scheme of his versification —there are more thoughts highly poetical there is more reflection, and the nobler properties of mind and intellect are brought into more intense action not only than in the whole course of French poetry, but also in the whole of continental nor do I think

[14 From and to versification added in 3rd ed From there to ' pedestal (19 lines) added in 2nd ed Second ed reads than in the Iliad, nor do I &c]

(I must here also speak with hesitation) that any one drama of Shakspeare contains so many Smile as you will, signor Conte what must I think of a city where Michel-Angelo Frate Bartolomeo Ghiberti (who formed them) Guicciardini, and Machiavelli [15] were secondary men? And certainly such were they if we compare them with Galileo and Boccaccio and Dante

Alfieri I smiled from pure delight which I rarely do, for I take an interest deep and vital in such men and in those who appreciate them rightly and praise them unreservedly These are my fellow-citizens I acknowledge no other we are of the same tribe of the same household I bow to them as being older than myself and I love them as being better

Salomon Let us hope that our Italy is not yet effete Filangieri died but lately what think you of him?

Alfieri If it were possible that I could ever see his statue in a square at Constantinople, though I should be scourged for an idolater I would kiss the pedestal As [16] this however, is less likely than that I should suffer for writing satirically, and as criticism is less likely to mislead me than speculation I will revert to our former subject

Indignation and contempt may be expressed in other poems than such as are usually called satires Filicaia in his celebrated address to Italy steers a middle course

Salomon True he is neither indignant nor contemptuous but the verses of Michel Angelo would serve rather for an example, added to which they are much better

Alfieri In fact, the former part of Filicaia's is verbose and confused let us analyse them —

> Italia Italia o tu cui *die* la sorte
> *D* infelice di bellezza onde hai
> Funesta *dote* d infiniti guai
> Che in fronte scritti *p g n doglia* porti

Fate gives the *gift*, and this *gift* gives the dowry which dowry consists of infinite *griefs*, and these griefs Italy carries written on her brow though great *sorrow!*—

> Deh fosti tu *m* bella o *almen* più forte!

[15] Second ed for Machiavelli reads Boccaccio One line below, Boccaccio added in 3rd ed]

[16] From As to subject (4 lines) added in 3rd ed]

Men and *almen* sound wretchedly he might have written *oppur* * There are those who would persuade us that verbal criticism is unfair, and that few poems can resist it The truth of the latter assertion by no means establishes the former all good criticism hath its foundation on verbal Long dissertations are often denominated criticisms without one analysis instead of which it is thought enough to say 'There is nothing finer in our language —we can safely recommend—imbued with the true spirit—destined to immortality, &c

A perfect piece of criticism must exhibit *where* a work is good or bad *why* it is good or bad in what degree it is good or bad must also demonstrate in what manner and to what extent the same ideas or reflections have come to others and if they be clothed in poetry, why, by an apparently slight variation what in one author is mediocrity, in another is excellence I have never seen a critic of Florence or Pisa or Milan or Bologna who did not commend and admire the sonnet of Cassiani on the rape of Proserpine without a suspicion of its manifold and grave defects Few sonnets are indeed so good but if we examine it attentively, we shall discover its flaws and patches —

Die un alto strido gitto i fiori e volta
All impiovisa *ma* che la *ns*
Tutta in se *p la tem d f lta*
La Siciliana vergine si strinse

The *hand* is inadequate to embrace a *body* *strinse* which comes after, would have done better and the last two verses tell only what the first two had told, and feebly nothing can be more so than the *tema onde fu colta*

There is another sonnet of Filicaia *to Italy* remarkable for identity of sound in four correspondent closes —

Dov è Italia il tuo braccio? e a che ti *v*
Iu dell altrui? Non c se io scorgo il vero
Di chi ti offende il difensor men fero
Ambi nemici sono ambi fur *rv*
Cosi dunque l onor cosi con *e v*
Gli avanzi tu del glorioso impero?
Cosi al valor cosi al valor primiero
(Che a te fede giurò) la fede os *ervi*?

Il nero dio la calda bocca involta
D ispido pelo a ingordo baci > spinse
E di stigia fuligin con la folta
Barba l eburnea gola *e l n l tinse*

Does not this describe the devils of our carnival, rather than the majestic brother of Jupiter at whose side upon asphodel and amaranth the sweet Persephone sits pensively contented in that deep motionless quiet which mortals pity and which the gods enjoy rather than him who, under the umbrage of Elysium, gazes at once upon all the beauties that on earth were separated, —Helena and Eriphyle Polyxena and Hermione, Deidamia and Deianira, Leda and Omphale Atalanta and Cydippe, Laodamia, with her arm round the neck of a fond youth whom she still seems afraid of losing and apart the daughters of Niobe[17] clinging to their parent?

Salomon These images are better than satires but continue, in preference to other thoughts or pursuits the noble career you have entered Be contented signor Conte with the glory of our first great dramatist and neglect altogether any inferior one Why vex and torment yourself about the French? They buzz! and are troublesome while they are swarming but the master will soon hive them Is the whole nation worth the worst of your tragedies? All the present race of them all the creatures in the world which excite your indignation, will lie in the grave, while young and old are clapping their hands or beating their bosoms at your *Bruto Primo* Consider also that kings and emperors should in your estimation be but as grasshoppers and beetles let them consume a few blades of your clover without molesting them without bringing them to crawl on you and claw you The difference between them and men of genius is almost as great as between men of genius and those higher intelligences who act in immediate subordination to the Almighty Yes, I assert it, without flattery and without fear, the angels are not higher above mortals than you are above the proudest that trample on them

Alfieri I believe, sir, you were the first in commending my tragedies.

[17 First ed reads Niobe though now in smiles parent; and many thousands more each of whom is worth the dominions once envied of both brothers *Salomon* &c]

Salomon He who first praises a good book becomingly is next in merit to the author

Alfieri As a writer and as a man I know my station if I found in the world five equal to myself I would walk out of it not to be jostled

I must now signor Salomon take my leave of you for his Eminence my coachman and their Excellencies my horses are waiting

XI ROUSSEAU AND MALESHERBES[1]

Rousseau. I am ashamed sir of my countrymen let my humiliation expiate their offence I wish it had not been a minister of the gospel who received you with such inhospitality

[1 The scene of this Conversation is the village of Motiers Travers where Rousseau lived for a short time after his sudden departure from France It was there that he put on the Armenian dress to the bewilderment of his neighbours With M de Montmollin the pastor he was at first on good terms but if we may trust Rousseau's own account in his Confessions the publication of the Lettres de ma Montagne turned the friendship into persecution It is not likely that Malesherbes ever travelled so far He was however a friend to Rousseau and indeed to all the men of letters of the time He held for some years the post of censor and used his powers to grant to literature as much irregular freedom as the laws could be strained to permit and more than was consistent with his office He lost his life in the Terror and it is said that he deeply regretted that by any act of his he had opened the way to the Revolution If he did say so he failed for once at least in clear sightedness Note in 1st ed reads Among the four illustrious victims of the French Revolution Malesherbes was I think the most so Roland Lavoisier Bailly and he were four such characters as the princes of Europe could not consign to the scaffold or the flames to banishment or neglect France seems to have thought herself unable to show her great men unless the executioner held up their heads The condemnation of Malesherbes and the coronation of Buonaparte are the two most detestable crimes committed by the French in the whole course of their Revolution How different the destiny of the best and worst men among them! Never has there been so deplorable a judgment as that by which Malesherbes was sent in his old age and with his daughter and his grand daughter to the scaffold since the time of Phocion (Imag Convers, iii 1828 Work si 1846 Works iv 1876)]

Malesherbes Nothing can be more ardent and more cordial than the expressions with which you greet me, M Rousseau on my return from your lakes and mountains

Rousseau If the pastor took you for a courtier, I reverence him for his contemptuousness

Malesherbes Why so? Indeed you are in the wrong, my friend No person has a right to treat another with contemptuousness unless he knows him to deserve it When a courtier enters the house of a pastor in preference to the next the pastor should partake in the sentiment that induced him or at least not be offended to be preferred A courtier is such at court in the house of a clergyman he is not a courtier but a guest. If to be a courtier is offensive remember that we punish offences where they are committed, where they can be examined, where pleadings can be heard for and against the accused, and where nothing is admitted extraneous from the indictment, excepting what may be adduced in his behalf by witnesses to the general tenor of his character

Rousseau Is it really true that the man told you to mount the hay loft if you wished a night s lodging?

Malesherbes He did a certain proof that he no more took me to be a courtier than I took him to be I accepted his offer, and never slept so soundly Moderate fatigue, the Alpine air, the blaze of a good fire (for I was admitted to it some moments), and a profusion of odoriferous hay, below which a cow was sleeping, subdued my senses and protracted my slumbers beyond the usual hour

Rousseau You have no right, sir, to be the patron and remunerator of inhospitality Three or four such men as you would corrupt all Switzerland and prepare it for the fangs of France and Austria Kings like hyenas, will always fall upon dead carcasses although their bellies are full, and although they are conscious that in the end they will tear one another to pieces over them. Why should you prepare their prey? Were your fire and effulgence given you for this? Why, in short, did you thank this churl? Why did you recommend him to his superiors for preferment on the next vacancy?

Malesherbes I must adopt your opinion of his behavior in order to answer you satisfactorily You suppose him unhospit-

able what milder or more effectual mode of reproving him, than to make every dish at his table admonish him? If he did evil, have I no authority before me which commands me to render him good for it? Believe me M Rousseau the execution of this command is always accompanied by the heart's applause, and opportunities of obedience are more frequent here than anywhere Would not you exchange resentment for the contrary feeling, even if religion or duty said nothing about the matter? I am afraid the most philosophical of us are sometimes a little perverse and will not be so happy as they might be because the path is pointed out to them and because he who points it out is wise and powerful Obstinacy and jealousy the worst parts of childhood and of manhood, have range enough for their ill humors without the heavens

Rousseau Sir, I perceive you are among my enemies I did not think it for, whatever may be my faults, I am totally free from suspicion

Malesherbes And do not think it now I entreat you, my good friend

Rousseau Courts and society have corrupted the best heart in France, and have perverted the best intellect

Malesherbes They have done much evil then

Rousseau Answer me and your own conscience how could you choose to live among the perfidies of Paris and Versailles?

Malesherbes Lawyers, and advocates in particular, must live there, philosophers need not. If every honest man thought it requisite to leave those cities, would the inhabitants be the better?

Rousseau You have entered into intimacies with the members of various administrations opposite in plans and sentiments but alike hostile to you, and all of whom, if they could have kept your talents down, would have done it Finding the thing impossible, they ceased to persecute and would gladly tempt you under the semblance of friendship and esteem to supplicate for some office, that they might indicate to the world your unworthiness by refusing you a proof, as you know quite sufficient and self-evident

Malesherbes They will never tempt me to supplicate for

any thing but justice and that in behalf of others I know nothing of parties If I am acquainted with two persons of opposite sides in politics, I consider them as you consider a watchmaker and a cabinet maker one desires to rise by one way the other by another Administrations and systems of government would be quite indifferent to those very functionaries and their opponents, who appear the most zealous partisans, if their fortunes and consequence were not affixed to them Several of these men seem consistent and indeed are the reason is versatility would loosen and detach from them the public esteem and confidence —

Rousseau By which their girandoles are lighted, their dinners served their lacqueys liveried and their opera-girls vie in benefit-nights There is no State in Europe where the least wise have not governed the most wise We find the light and foolish keeping up with the machinery of government easily and leisurely just as we see butterflies keep up with carriages at full speed This is owing in both cases to their levity and their position the stronger and the more active are left behind I am resolved to prove that farmers general are the main causes of the defects in our music

Malesherbes Prove it, or any thing else, provided that the discussion does not irritate and torment you

Rousseau Truth is the object of philosophy

Malesherbes Not of philosophers the display of ingenuity, for the most part, is and always has been it I must here offer you an opinion of my own, which, if you think well of me you will pardon, though you should disbelieve its solidity My opinion then is, that truth is not reasonably the main and ultimate object of philosophy but that philosophy should seek truth merely as the means of acquiring and of propagating happiness. Truths are simple, wisdom, which is formed by their apposition and application, is concrete out of this, in its vast varieties, open to our wants and wishes, comes happiness But the knowledge of all the truths ever yet discovered does not lead immediately to it, nor indeed will ever reach it, unless you make the more important of them bear upon your heart and intellect, and form, as it were, the blood that moves and nurtures them

Rousseau I never until now entertained a doubt that truth is

the ultimate aim and object of philosophy no writer has denied it, I think.

Malesherbes Designedly none may but when it is agreed that happiness is the chief good, it must also be agreed that the chief wisdom will pursue it and I have already said what your own experience cannot but have pointed out to you that no truth, or series of truths hypothetically can communicate or attain it Come, M Rousseau, tell me candidly do you derive no pleasure from a sense of superiority in genius and independence?

Rousseau The highest, sir from a consciousness of in dependence

Malesherbes *Ingenuous* is the epithet we affix to modesty, but modesty often makes men act otherwise than ingenuously you, for example now You are angry at the servility of people, and disgusted at their obtuseness and indifference on matters of most import to their welfare If they were equal to you, this anger would cease, but the fire would break out somewhere else on ground which appears at present sound and level [2] Voltaire for instance, is less eloquent than you but Voltaire is wittier than any man living This quality—

Rousseau Is the quality of a buffoon and a courtier But the buffoon should have most of it, to support his higher dignity

Malesherbes Voltaire s is Attic

Rousseau If malignity is Attic Petulance is not wit, although a few grains of wit may be found in petulance, quartz is not gold although a few grains of gold may be found in quartz Voltaire is a monkey in mischief, and a spaniel in obsequiousness He declaims against the cruel and tyrannical, and he kisses the hands of adulteresses who murder their husbands and of robbers who decimate their gang

Malesherbes I will not discuss with you the character of the man, and only that part of the author's on which I spoke There may be malignity in wit, there cannot be violence You may irritate and disquiet with it but it must be by means of a flower or a

[2 First ed reads level You would only be the most eloquent man that ever lived and even here you would tread upon thorns Cicero and your neighbour Voltaire are wittier The latter is more Attic than any Athenian ever was *Rous eau* If malignity is Attic *Mal herb* I will not discuss " &c (14 lines below)]

feather Wit and humor stand on one side, irony and sarcasm on the other

Rousseau They stand very near

Malesherbes So do the Elysian fields and Tartarus

Rousseau Pray, go on teach me to stand quiet in my stall, while my masters and managers pass by

Malesherbes Well then —Pascal argues as closely and methodically Bossuet is as scientific in the structure of his sentences; Demosthenes many think, has equal fire, vigor, dexterity equal selection of topics and equal temperance in treating them immeasurably as he falls short of you in appeals to the sensibility and in every thing which by way of excellence we usually call genius

Rousseau Sir I see no resemblance between a pleader at the bar, or a haranguer of the populace and me

Malesherbes Certainly his questions are occasional but one great question hangs in the centre, and high above the rest and this is whether the Mother of liberty and civilization shall exist, or whether she shall be extinguished in the bosom of her family As we often apply to Eloquence and her parts the terms we apply to Architecture and hers, let me do it also and remark that nothing can be more simple solid, and symmetrical, nothing more frugal in decoration or more appropriate in distribution than the apartments of Demosthenes. Yours excel them in space and altitude, your ornaments are equally chaste and beautiful, with more variety and invention more airiness and light But why, among the Loves and Graces, does Apollo flay Marsyas?—and why may not the tiara still cover the ears of Midas? Cannot you, who detest kings and courtiers keep away from them? If I must be with them let me be in good humor and good spirits If I will tread upon a Persian carpet let it at least be in clean shoes

As the laciest wine makes the sharpest vinegar, so the richest fancies turn the most readily to acrimony Keep yours, my dear M Rousseau, from the exposure and heats that generate it. Be contented enjoy your fine imagination and do not throw your salad out of window, nor shove your cat off your knee, on hearing it said that Shakspeare has a finer, or that a minister is of opinion that you know more of music than of state My friend! the quarrels of ingenious men are generally far less reasonable and just, less placable and moderate, than those of the stupid and ignorant

We ought to blush at this and we should blush yet more deeply if we bring them in as parties to our differences. Let us conquer by kindness which we cannot do easily or well without communication Our[3] antipathies ought to be against the vices of men, and not against their opinions If their opinions are widely different from ours, their vices ought to render them more dissimilar to us Yet the opinions instigate us to hostility the vices are snatched at with avidity as rich materials to adorn our triumph

Rousseau This is sophistry and at best is applicable only to the malicious At a moment when truth is penetrating the castle of the powerful and when freedom looks into the window of the poor there are writers who would draw them back and confine them to their own libraries and theatres

Malesherbes Whether they proceed from the shelf or from the stage, generous sentiments are prevalent among us and the steps both of truth and freedom are not the less rapid or the less firm because they advance in silence Montesquieu has rendered them greater and more lasting service, than the fiercest anabaptist in Munster

Rousseau Many read him, some are pleased with him few are instructed by him none are guided His *Lettres Persanes* are light and lively His *Temple de Guide* is Parisian from the steps to the roof there is but little imagination in it, and no warmth There is more of fancy in his *Esprit des Lois* of which the title-page would be much corrected with only the first word than with all three He twitches me by the coat turns me round, and is gone

Malesherbes Concise he certainly is, but he also is acute

Rousseau How far does his acuteness penetrate? A pin can pierce no deeper than to its head He would persuade men that, if patriotism is the growth of republics, honor is the growth of monarchies I would say it without offence, but say it I will, that honor is feeble and almost extinct in every ancient kingdom In Spain it flourished more vigorously than in any other pray, how much is left there? And what addition was made to it when the Bourbon crossed the Bidassoa? One vile family is sufficient to debase a whole nation Voltaire, perhaps as honest and

[3 From "Our to them (121 lines) added in 2nd ed.]

certainly as clear-sighted a man as any about the Tuileries, called Louis XV *Titus* Is this honor? If it be pray show me the distinction between that quality and truth As I cannot think a liar honorable I cannot think a lie honor Gentlemen at court would rather give their lives than be *called* what they would scarcely give a *denier* not to *be* Readiness to display courage is not honor though it is what Montesquieu mistakes for it. Surely he might have praised his country for something better than this fantastic foolery which like hair powder requires a mask to be worn by those who put it on He might have said, justly and proudly that while others cling to a city to a faction, to a family, the French in all their fortunes cling to France

Malesherbes Gratify me, I entreat you, by giving me your idea of honor

Rousseau The image stands before me, substantially and vigorously alive Justice generosity delicacy, are the three Graces that formed his mind Propriety of speech clearness, firmness—

Malesherbes Repress this enthusiasm If you are known to have made me blush, you ruin me for ever in my profession

Rousseau Look, then across the narrow sea When Edward the Black Prince made your king his prisoner, he reverenced his age his station, his misfortunes, attending him, serving him, consoling him like a son Many of your countrymen who were then living lived to see the tide of victory turn, and the conquerors led into captivity Talbot, whose name alone held provinces back from rebellion, was betrayed and taken, and loaded with indignities

Malesherbes Attribute it to the times The English were as cruel to fallen valor in the person of Jeanne d Arc

Rousseau There neither the genius of the nation nor the spirit of the times is reproachable, but the genius and spirit of fanaticism, which is violent and blind in all alike Jeanne d Arc was believed to be a sorceress, and was condemned to death for it by the ecclesiastical judges of each nation Nothing but the full belief of the English that she was under the guidance of an invisible and evil power would have turned to flight those Saxo-Normans who never yielded to the Franco-Gauls when there were only three against one, no, not once in the successful

contest during three hundred years, which ended in the utter subjugation of your country As the French acknowledged her to be the inspired of God they fancied there was no danger in following her as the English thought her instigated by the Devil, they felt the insufficiency of human force in opposing her Wherever she was not the field was covered with French bodies, as before, wherever she was, it was covered with English, as it never had been until then Had Jeanne d Arc been born in England and fought for England, the people at this hour, although no longer slaves to idolatry would almost worship her every year would her festival be kept in every village of the land But in France not a hymn is chanted to her not a curl of incense is wafted, not a taper is lighted not a daisy not a rush is strewn upon the ground throughout the whole kingdom she rescued Instead of which, a shirt aircr to a libidinous king —a ribald poet a pie bald of tragedy and comedy, a contemner alike of purity and patriotism, — throws his filth against her mutilated features Meanwhile an edifice is being erected in your city to the glory of Geneviève, which will exhaust the fortunes and almost the maledictions of the people

Malesherbes We certainly are not the most grateful of nations.

Rousseau You must be, before you pretend to be the most honorable

Malesherbes I hope our gratitude in future will be excited by something better than the instruments of war The nation is growing more civilized and humane the young have never lapped blood.

Rousseau I prefer the vices of the present king to the glories of his predecessor I prefer a swine to a panther, and the outer side of the stye or grating to the inner

Malesherbes You being a philanthropist must rejoice that our reigning prince abstains from the field of battle

Rousseau Unless he did, he could not continue to give a thousand louis daily for the young maidens brought to him A prodigal man is a thoughtless man a prodigal prince is a thought less robber Your country endures enough without war But oppression and valor, like Voltaire's fever and quinquina, grow not apart.

Malesherbes What! and are not our people brave?

Rousseau I call those brave and those only, who rise up simultaneously against the first indignity offered by their administrators, and who remove, without pause and without parley, trunk, root, and branch.

Malesherbes As we cannot change at once the whole fabric of government, let us be attentive to the unsounder parts, and recommend the readiest and safest method of repairing them.

Rousseau The minister would expel me from his antechamber and order his valets to buffet me if I offered him any proposal for the advantage of mankind.

Malesherbes Call to him then from this room, where the valets are civiler. Nature has given you a speaking trumpet, which neither storm can drown nor enemy can silence. If you esteem him instruct him: if you despise him, do the same. Surely you who have much benevolence would not despise any one willingly or unnecessarily. Contempt is for the incorrigible: now, where upon earth is he whom your genius, if rightly and temperately exerted, would not influence and correct?

I never was more flattered or honored than by your patience in listening to me. Consider me as an old woman who sits by the bedside in your infirmity, who brings you no savory viand, no exotic fruit, but a basin of whey or a basket of strawberries from your native hills, assures you that what oppressed you was a dream, occasioned by the wrong position in which you lay, opens the window, gives you fresh air, and entreats you to recollect the features of Nature and to observe (which no man ever did so accurately) their beauty. In your politics you cut down a forest to make a toothpick and cannot make even that out of it! Do not let us in jurisprudence be like critics in the classics, and change whatever can be changed right or wrong. No statesman will take your advice. Supposing that any one is liberal in his sentiments and clear-sighted in his views, nevertheless love of power is jealous, and he would rejoice to see you fleeing from persecution or turning to meet it. The very men whom you would benefit will treat you worse. As the ministers of kings wish their masters to possess absolute power that the exercise of it may be delegated to them, which it naturally is from the violence and sloth alternate with despots as with wild beasts, and

that they may apprehend no check or control from those who discover their misdemeanors in like manner the people places more trust in favor than in fortune and hopes to obtain by subserviency what it never might by election or by chance Else in free governments so some are called (for names once given are the last things lost) all minor offices and employments would be assigned by ballot Each province or canton would present a list annually of such persons in it as are worthy to occupy the local administrations

To avoid any allusion to the country in which we live let us take England for example Is it not absurd, iniquitous and revolting that the minister of a church in Yorkshire should be appointed by a lawyer in London who never knew him never saw him, never heard from a single one of the parishioners a recommendation of any kind?[4] Is it not more reasonable that a justice of the peace should be chosen by those who have always been witnesses of his equity?

Rousseau The English in former days insisted more firmly and urgently on improving their Constitution than they have ever done since In the reign of Edward III they claimed the nomination of the chancellor And surely if any nomination of any functionary is left to the people it should be this It is somewhat like the tribunitial power among the Romans and is the only one which can intercede in a conciliatory way between the prince and people Exclusively of this one office in the higher posts of government the king should appoint his ministers, and should invest them with power and splendor but those ministers should not appoint to any civil or religious place of trust or profit which the community could manifestly fill better The greater part of offices and dignities should be conferred for a short and stated time, that all might hope to attain and strive to deserve them Embassies in particular should never exceed one year in Europe, nor consulates two To the latter office I assign this duration as the more difficult to fulfil properly, from requiring a knowledge of trade although a slight one, and because those who possess any such knowledge are inclined for the greater

[4 First ed reads kind or a syllable in his favour Is it not more reasonable that a collector of taxes or a justice &c Two lines below from "*Rousseau* to 'government (9 lines) added in 2nd ed]

part to turn it to their own account, which a consul ought by no means to do Frequent [5] election of representatives and of civil officers in the subordinate employments would remove most causes of discontent in the people and of instability in kingly power Here is a lottery in which every one is sure of a prize, if not for himself at least for somebody in his family or among his friends, and the ticket would be fairly paid for out of the taxes

Malesherbes So it appears to me What other system can present so obviously to the great mass of the people the two principal piers and buttresses of government, tangible interest and reasonable hope? No danger of any kind can arise from it, no antipathies no divisions no imposture of demagogues no caprice of despots On the contrary many and great advantages in places which at the first survey do not appear to border on it. At present the best of the English juridical institutions that of justices of the peace is viewed with diffidence and distrust Elected as they would be and increased in number the whole judicature civil and criminal might be confided to them, and their labors be not only not aggravated but diminished Suppose them in four divisions to meet at four places in every county once in twenty[6] days and to possess the power of imposing a fine not exceeding two hundred francs on every cause implying oppression, and one not exceeding fifty on such as they should unanimously declare frivolous

Rousseau Few would become attorneys and those from among the indigent

Malesherbes Almost the greatest evil that exists in the world, moral or physical, would be removed A second appeal might be made in the following session a third could only come before Parliament, and this alone by means of attorneys, the number of whom altogether would not exceed the number of coroners for in England there are as many who cut their own throats as who would cut their own purses

Rousseau The famous *trial by jury* would cease this would disgust the English

Malesherbes The number of justices would be much augmented nearly all those who now are jurymen would enjoy this rank and

[5 First ed reads do *Rousseau* Frequent &c]
[6 First ed reads in ten days]

dignity, and would be flattered by sitting on the same bench with the first gentlemen of the land

Rousseau What number would sit?

Malesherbes Three or five in the first instance five or seven in the second —as the number of causes should permit

Rousseau The laws of England are extremely intricate and perplexed such men would be puzzled

Malesherbes Such men having no interest in the perplexity but on the contrary an interest in unravelling it, would see such laws corrected Intricate as they are questions on those which are the most so are usually referred by the judges themselves to private arbitration of which my plan I conceive, has all the advantages, united to those of open and free discussion among men of unperverted sense and unbiassed by professional hopes and interests The different courts of law in England cost about seventy millions of francs annually On my system the justices or judges would receive five and-twenty francs daily as the *special jurymen* do now without any sense of shame or impropriety, however rich they may be such being the established practice

Rousseau Seventy millions! seventy millions!

Malesherbes There are attorneys and conveyancers in London who gain one hundred thousand francs a year, and advocates more The chancellor—

Rousseau The Celeno of these harpies—

Malesherbes Nets above one million and is greatly more than an archbishop in the church scattering preferment in Cumberland and Cornwall from his bench at Westminster

Rousseau Absurdities and enormities are great in proportion to custom or insuetude If we had lived from childhood with a *boa constrictor*, we should think it no more a monster than a canary bird The sum you mentioned, of seventy millions, is incredible

Malesherbes In this estimate the expense of letters by the post, and of journeys made by the parties, is not and cannot be included

Rousseau The whole machine of government civil and religious, ought never to bear upon the people with a weight so oppressive I do not add the national defence, which being

principally naval is more costly, nor institutions for the promotion of the arts which in a country like England ought to be liberal But such an expenditure should nearly suffice for these also, in time of peace Religion and law indeed should cost nothing at present the one hangs property the other quarters it I am confounded at the profusion I doubt whether the Romans expended so much in that year's war which dissolved the Carthaginian empire and left them masters of the universe What is certain, and what is better it did not cost a tenth of it to colonize Pennsylvania in whose forests the cradle of freedom is suspended, and where the eye of philanthropy, tired with tears and vigils, may wander and may rest Your system, or rather your arrangement of one already established, pleases me Ministers would only lose thereby that portion of their possessions which they give away to needy relatives unworthy dependents, or the requisite supporters of their authority and power

Malesherbes On this plan no such supporters would be necessary no such dependents could exist, and no such relatives could be disappointed Beside, the conflicts of their opponents must be periodical weak and irregular

Rousseau The craving for the rich carrion would be less keen the zeal of opposition as usual would be measured by the stomach whereon hope and overlooking have always a strong influence

Malesherbes My excellent friend do not be offended with me for an ingenious and frank confession promise me your pardon

Rousseau You need none

Malesherbes Promise it nevertheless

Rousseau You have said nothing, done nothing which could in any way displease me

Malesherbes You grant me then a bill of indemnity for what I may have undertaken with a good intention since we have been together?

[7 First ed reads *R seau* The country would be at worst but as one Prometheus to one vulture and there being no instruments at hand, no voices under the rock to drive him off the craving influence The meaning of the word *ambition* which few understand even now and which many have an interest in misinterpreting must after a time be sought for in the dictionary *Malesherbe* My excellent, &c]

Rousseau Willingly

Malesherbes I fell into your views, I walked along with you side by side merely to occupy your mind which I perceived was agitated

Rousseau [8] In other words to betray me I had begun to imagine there was one man in the universe not my enemy

Malesherbes There are many, my dear M Rousseau! yes even in France and England to say nothing of the remoter regions on each side of the equator discovered and undiscovered Be reasonable be just

Rousseau I am the only man who is either What would you say more?

Malesherbes Perhaps I would even say less. You are fond of discoursing on the visionary and hypothetical I usually avoid it.

Rousseau Pray why, sir?

Malesherbes Because it renders us more and more discontented with the condition in which Divine Providence hath placed us We can hope to remove but a small portion of the evils that encompass us there being many men to whom these are no evils at all and such having the management of our concerns and keeping us under them as tightly as the old man kept Sinbad

Rousseau I would teach them that what are evils to us are evils to them likewise and heavier and more dangerous The rash, impetuous rider or (to adopt your allusion) the intolerably heavy one is more liable to break his bones by a fall than the animal he has mounted Sooner or later the cloud of tyranny bursts and fortunes piled up inordinately and immeasureably not only are scattered and lost but first overwhelm the occupier We, like metallic blocks, are hardened by the repetition of the blows that flatten us and every part of us touching the ground, we cannot fall lower the hammerers once fallen, are annihilated

Your remarks although inapplicable to the Continent are applicable to England and several of them, however they may

[8 From *R 1 a* to *Mal h b* (48 lines) added in 2nd ed First ed reads agitated You are fond of discoursing on these matters, I dislike it For compliance &c]

be pecked scratched and kicked about by the pullets fattening in the darkened chambers of Parliament, are worthy of being weighed by the people loath as may be ministers of state to employ the scales of Justice on any such occasion But if the steadier hand refuses to perform its functions, the stronger may usurp them

Malesherbes Nothing more probable Often the worst evil of bad government is not in its action but its counteraction

Rousseau Is it possible to doubt at what country you now are pointing? I cannot see then why you should have treated me like a driveller

Malesherbes How so, my friend,—how so?

Rousseau To say the least why you should believe me indifferent to the welfare of your country, to the dictates of humanity to the improvement of the species

Malesherbes In compliance with your humor to engage your fancy, to divert it awhile from Switzerland [9] by which you appear and partly on my account to be offended, I began with reflections upon England I raised up another cloud in the region of them, light enough to be fantastic and diaphanous and to catch some little irradiation from its western sun Do not run after it farther, it has vanished already Consider the three great nations—

Rousseau Pray which are those?

Malesherbes I cannot in conscience give the palm to the Hottentots the Greenlanders, or the Hurons I meant to designate those who united to empire the most social virtue and civil freedom Athens, Rome and England have received on the subject of government elaborate treatises for their greatest men You have reasoned more dispassionately and profoundly on it than Plato has done, or probably than Cicero, led away as he often is by the authority of those who are inferior to himself but do you excel Aristoteles in calm and patient investigation? Or think you, are your reading and range of thought more extensive than Harrington's and Milton's? Yet what effect have the political works of these marvellous men produced upon the world?—What effect upon any one State, any one city, any one hamlet? A clerk in office, an accountant, a gauger

[9 First ed reads Switzerland and France I raised up &c]

of small-beer a song-writer for a tavern dinner, produces more He thrusts his rags into the hole whence the wind comes, and sleeps soundly While you and I are talking about elevations and proportions pillars and pilasters architraves and friezes the buildings we should repair are falling to the earth and the materials for their restoration are in the quarry

Rousseau I could answer you but my mind has certain moments of repose or rather of oscillation which I would not for the world disturb Music eloquence, friendship bring and prolong them

Malesherbes Enjoy them, my dear friend, and convert them if possible to months and years It is as much at your arbitration on what theme you shall meditate as in what meadow you shall botanize and you have as much at your option the choice of your thoughts as of the keys in your harpsichord

Rousseau If this were true, who could be unhappy?

Malesherbes Those of whom it is not true Those who from want of practice cannot manage their thoughts who have few to select from and who because of their sloth or of their weakness, do not roll away the heaviest from before them

XII JOSEPH SCALIGER AND MONTAIGNE[1]

Montaigne What could have brought you, M de l Escale to visit the old man of the mountain other than a good heart? Oh how delighted and charmed I am to hear you speak such excellent Gascon * You rise early I see you must have risen with the sun to be here at this hour it is a stout half hour's walk from the brook I have capital white wine and the best cheese in Auvergne You saw the goats and the two cows before the castle

Pierre, thou hast done well set it upon the table, and tell

[1 Imag Convers iii 1828 Works i 1846 Works iv 1876]
* "Ma mère était fort éloquente en Gascon —*Scaliger a* p 232

Master Matthew to split a couple of chickens and broil them, and to pepper but one Do you like pepper, M de l Escale?

Scaliger Not much

Montaigne Hold hard! let the pepper alone I hate it Tell him to broil plenty of ham only two slices at a time upon his salvation

Scaliger This I perceive is the antechamber to your library here are your every day books

Montaigne Faith! I have no other These are plenty, methinks is not that your opinion?

Scaliger You have great resources within yourself and therefore can do with fewer

Montaigne Why how many now do you think here may be?

Scaliger I did not believe at first that there could be above fourscore

Montaigne Well! are fourscore few?—are we talking of peas and beans?

Scaliger I and my father (put together) have written well-nigh as many

Montaigne Ah! to write them is quite another thing but one reads books without a spur or even a pat from our Lady Vanity How do you like my wine —it comes from the little knoll yonder you cannot see the vines, those chestnut-trees are between

Scaliger The wine is excellent light odoriferous with a smartness like a sharp child s prattle

Montaigne It never goes to the head, nor pulls the nerves, which many do as if they were guitar-strings I drink a couple of bottles a day, winter and summer and never am the worse for it You gentlemen of the Agennois have better in your province, and indeed the very best under the sun I do not wonder that the Parliament of Bordeaux should be jealous of their privileges, and call it Bordeaux[2] Now, if you prefer your own country wine, only say it I have several bottles in my cellar, with corks as long as rapiers, and as polished I do not know M de l'Escale, whether you are particular in these matters not quite, I should imagine, so great a judge in them as in others?

[2 First ed reads Bordeaux wine All privileges are unjust, this as bad as any now &c]

Scaliger I know three things — wine, poetry and the world *

Montaigne You know one too many then I hardly know whether I know any thing about poetry, for I like Clem Marot better than Ronsard Ronsard is so plaguily stiff and stately where there is no occasion for it I verily do think the man must have slept with his wife in a cuirass

Scaliger [3] He had no wife he was an *abbe* at Tours

Montaigne True true being an abbe he could never have one and never want one particularly at Tours where the women profess an especial calling and most devotional turn for the religious

Scaliger It pleases me greatly that you like Marot His version of the *Psalms* is lately set to music, and added to the *New Testament*, of Geneva

Montaigne It is putting a slice of honeycomb into a barrel of vinegar, which will never grow the sweeter for it

Scaliger Surely, you do not think in this fashion of the *New Testament*!

Montaigne Who supposes it? Whatever is mild and kindly is there But Jack Calvin has thrown bird-lime and vitriol upon it, and whoever but touches the cover dirties his fingers or burns them

Scaliger Calvin is a very great man I do assure you M de Montaigne

Montaigne I do not like your very great men who beckon me to them call me their begotten their dear child and their entrails and if I happen to say on any occasion, 'I beg leave sir to dissent a little from you' stamp and cry, The devil you do!' and whistle to the executioner

Scaliger You exaggerate, my worthy friend!

Montaigne Exaggerate do I, M de l'Escale? What was it he did the other day to the poor devil there with an odd name? —Melancthon, I think it is

Scaliger I do not know I have received no intelligence of late from Geneva

* Je me connais en trois choses, *non in alia in vno poe et juger de personnes* —*Scalige a a* p 232

[3 From *Scaliger* to religious (4 lines) added in 2nd ed]

Montaigne It was but last night that our curate rode over from Lyons (he made two days of it as you may suppose) and supped with me He told me that Jack had got his old friend hanged and burned I could not join him in the joke, for I find none such in the *New Testament* on which he would have founded it and if it is one it is not in my manner or to my taste

Scaliger I cannot well believe the report, my dear sir He was rather urgent, indeed, on the combustion of the heretic Michael Servetus some years past.

Montaigne A thousand to one, my spiritual guide mistook the name He has heard of both I warrant him and thinks in his conscience that either is as good a roast as the other

Scaliger Theologians are proud and intolerant, and truly the farthest of all men from theology, if theology means the rational sense of religion or indeed has any thing to do with it in any way Melancthon was the very best of the reformers, quiet, sedate, charitable intrepid firm in friendship, ardent in faith, acute in argument, and profound in learning

Montaigne Who cares about his argumentation or his learning, if he was the rest?

Scaliger I hope you will suspend your judgment on this affair, until you receive some more certain and positive information

Montaigne I can believe it of the Sieur Calvin

Scaliger I cannot John Calvin is a grave man orderly and reasonable

Montaigne In my opinion he has not the order nor the reason of my cook Mat never took a man for a sucking pig, cleaning and scraping and buttering and roasting him nor ever twitched God by the sleeve and swore he should not have his own way

Scaliger M de Montaigne, have you ever studied the doctrine of predestination?

Montaigne I should not understand it, if I had, and I would not break through an old fence merely to get into a cavern I would not give a fig or a fig leaf to know the truth of it, as far as any man can teach it me Would it make me honester or happier, or, in other things, wiser?

Scaliger I do not know whether it would materially

Montaigne I should be an egregious fool then to care about it Our disputes on controverted points have filled the country with missionaries and cut throats Both parties have shown a disposition to turn this comfortable old house of mine into a fortress If I had inclined to either the other would have done it Come walk about it with me after a ride you can do nothing better to take off fatigue

Scaliger A most spacious kitchen!

Montaigne Look up!

Scaliger You have twenty or more flitches of bacon hanging there

Montaigne And if I had been a doctor or a captain I should have had a cobweb and predestination in the place of them Your soldiers of the *religion* on the one side and of the *good old faith* on the other would not have left unto me safe and sound even that good old woman there

Scaliger Oh yes they would I hope

Old Woman Why dost giggle Mat? What should he know about the business? He speaks mighty bad French and is as spiteful as the devil Praised be God, we have a kind master who thinks about us, and feels for u

Scaliger Upon my word, M de Montaigne this gallery is an interesting one

Montaigne I can show you nothing but my house and my dairy We have no chase in the month of May you know,—unless you would like to bait the badger in the stable This is rare sport in rainy days

Scaliger Are you in earnest, M de Montaigne?

Montaigne No no no I cannot afford to worry him out right only a little for pastime,—a morning's merriment for the dogs and wenches

Scaliger You really are then of so happy a temperament that, at your time of life you can be amused by baiting a badger!

Montaigne Why not? Your father, a wiser and graver and older man than I am was amused by baiting a professor or critic I have not a dog in the kennel that would treat the badger worse than brave Julius treated Cardan and Erasmus and some dozens more We are all childish, old as well as young and our very last tooth would fain stick, M de l'Escale, in some tender place

of a neighbor Boys laugh at a person who falls in the dirt men laugh rather when they make him fall and most when the dirt is of their own laying

Is not the gallery rather cold, after the kitchen? We must go through it to get into the court where I keep my tame rabbits the stable is hard by come along come along

Scaliger Permit me to look a little at those banners Some of them are old indeed

Montaigne Upon my word I blush to think I never took notice how they are tattered I have no fewer than three women in the house, and in a summer s evening, only two hours long the worst of these rags might have been darned across

Scaliger You would not have done it surely!

Montaigne I am not over thrifty the women might have been better employed It is as well as it is then ay?

Scaliger I think so

Montaigne So be it

Scaliger They remind me of my own family, we being descended from the great Cane della Scala Prince of Verona and from the House of Hapsburg * as you must have heard from my father

Montaigne What signifies it to the world whether the great Cane was tied to his grandmother or not? As for the House of Hapsburg, if you could put together as many such houses as would make up a city larger than Cairo, they would not be worth his study or a sheet of paper on the table of it

XIII BOCCACCIO AND PETRARCA [1]

Boccaccio Remaining among us, I doubt not that you would soon receive the same distinctions in your native country as others

* Descendimus ex filiâ Comitis Hapsburgensis —*Salgrana* p 232

[1] This and the following Conversation were preparatory studies for the larger work in which Landor afterwards dealt with these two men (Imag Convers iv 1829 Works, i 1846 Works, iv 1876)]

have conferred upon you indeed, in confidence I may promise it. For greatly are the Florentines ashamed that the most elegant of their writers and the most independent of their citizens lives in exile, by the injustice he had suffered in the detriment done to his property through the intemperate administration of their laws

Petrarca Let them recall me soon and honorably then perhaps I may assist them to remove their ignominy, which I carry about with me wherever I go and which is pointed out by my exotic laurel

Boccaccio There is and ever will be in all countries and under all governments an ostracism for their greatest men

Petrarca At present we will talk no more about it To-morrow I pursue my journey toward Padua where I am expected where some few value and esteem me honest and learned and ingenious men although neither those Transpadane regions nor whatever extends beyond them have yet produced an equal to Boccaccio

Boccaccio Then in the name of friendship, do not go thither! —form such rather from your fellow citizens I love my equals heartily and shall love them the better when I see them raised up here, from our own mother earth, by you

Petrarca Let us continue our walk

Boccaccio If you have been delighted (and you say you have been) at seeing again after so long an absence the house and garden wherein I have placed the relaters of my stories as reported in the *Decameron*, come a little way further up the ascent, and we will pass through the vineyard on the west of the villa You will see presently another on the right lying in its warm little garden close to the roadside the scene lately of some what that would have looked well, as illustration, in the midst of your Latin reflections It shows us that people the most serious and determined may act at last contrariwise to the line of conduct they have laid down

Petrarca Relate it to me Messer Giovanni for you are able to give reality the merits and charms of fiction just as easily as you give fiction the semblance, the stature, and the movement of reality

Boccaccio I must here forego such powers, if in good truth I possess them

Petrarca This long green alley, defended by box and cypresses, is very pleasant The smell of box although not sweet is more agreeable to me than many that are I cannot say from what resuscitation of early and tender feeling The[2] cypress too seems to strengthen the nerves of the brain Indeed, I delight in the odor of most trees and plants

Will not that dog hurt us?—he comes closer

Boccaccio Dog! thou hast the colors of a magpie and the tongue of one prythee be quiet art thou not ashamed?

Petrarca Verily he trots off comforting his angry belly with his plenteous tail, flattened and bestrewn under it He looks back going on and puffs out his upper lip without a bark

Boccaccio These creatures are more accessible to temperate and just rebuke than the creatures of our species usually angry with less reason and from no sense, as dogs are of duty Look into that white arcade! Surely it was white the other day, and now I perceive it is still so the setting sun tinges it with yellow

Petrarca The house has nothing of either the rustic or the magnificent about it nothing quite regular nothing much varied If there is anything at all affecting as I fear there is in the story you are about to tell me I could wish the edifice itself bore externally some little of the interesting that I might hereafter turn my mind toward it, looking out of the catastrophe though not away from it But I do not even find the peculiar and uncostly decoration of our Tuscan villas the central turret, round which the kite perpetually circles in search of pigeons or smaller prey, borne onward, like the Flemish skater, by effortless will in motionless progression The view of Fiesole must be lovely from that window but I fancy to myself it loses the cascade under the single high arch of the Mugnone

Boccaccio I think so In this villa—come rather further off the inhabitants of it may hear us, if they should happen to be in the arbor as most people are at the present hour of day,—in this villa, Messer Francesco, lives Monna Tita Monalda, who tenderly loved Amadeo degli Oricellaria. She however was reserved and coy, and Father Pietro de Pucci, an enemy to the family of Amadeo, told her never more to think of him, for that,

[2 From "The to plants (3 lines) added in 2nd ed.]

just before he knew her he had thrown his arm round the neck of Nunciata Righi his mother's maid, calling her most immodestly a sweet creature and of a whiteness that marble would split with envy at

Monna Tita trembled and turned pale Father is the girl really so very fair? said she anxiously

"Madonna replied the father, 'after confession she is not much amiss white she is with a certain tint of pink not belonging to her but coming over her as through the wing of an angel pleased at the holy function and her breath is such the very air smells it poor, innocent, sinful soul! Her! The wretch Amadeo, would have endangered her salvation

'She must be a wicked girl to let him said Monna Tita "A young man of good parentage and education would not dare to do such a thing of his own accord I will see him no more however But it was before he knew me and it may not be true I cannot think any young woman would let a young man do so even in the last hour before Lent. Now in what month was it supposed to be?

Supposed to be! cried the father indignantly 'in June I say in June

"Oh! that now is quite impossible for on the second of July, forty-one days from this and at this very hour of it he swore to me eternal love and constancy I will inquire of him whether it is true I will charge him with it

She did Amadeo confessed his fault and, thinking it a venial one would have taken and kissed her hand as he asked forgiveness

Petrarca Children! children! I will go into the house, and if their relatives, as I suppose have approved of the marriage I will endeavor to persuade the young lady that a fault like this on the repentance of her lover is not unpardonable But first is Amadeo a young man of loose habits?

Boccaccio Less than our others in fact, I never heard of any deviation, excepting this

Petrarca Come then with me

Boccaccio Wait a little

Petrarca I hope the modest Tita after a trial will not be too severe with him

Boccaccio Severity is far from her nature but such is her purity and innocence, she shed many and bitter tears at his confession and declared her unalterable determination of taking the veil among the nuns of Fiesole Amadeo fell at her feet, and wept upon them She pushed him from her gently, and told him she would still love him if he would follow her example, leave the world, and become a friar of San Marco Amadeo was speechless and if he had not been so, he never would have made a promise he intended to violate She retired from him after a time he arose less wounded than benumbed by the sharp uncovered stones in the garden walk and as a man who fears to fall from a precipice goes farther from it than is necessary so did Amadeo shun the quarter where the gate is and oppressed by his agony and despair threw his arms across the sun dial and rest his brow upon it, hot as it must have been on a cloudless day in August. When the evening was about to close he was aroused by the cries of rooks over head they flew toward Florence, and beyond he too went back into the city

Tita fell sick from her inquietude Every morning ere sunrise did Amadeo return but could hear only from the laborers in the field that Monna Tita was ill because she had promised to take the veil and had not taken it, knowing, as she must do that the heavenly bridegroom is a bridegroom never to be trifled with, let the spouse be young and beautiful as she may be Amadeo had often conversed with the peasant of the farm who much pitied so worthy and loving a gentleman, and finding him one evening fixing some thick and high stakes in the ground, offered to help him After due thanks It is time said the peasant, "to rebuild the hovel and watch the grapes

He went into the stable, collected the old pillars of his autumnal observatory drove them into the ground, and threw the matting over them

"This is my house" cried he 'Could I never, in my stupidity, think about rebuilding it before?' Bring me another mat or two I will sleep here to night to-morrow night, every night, all autumn, all winter

He slept there, and was consoled at last by hearing that Monna Tita was out of danger, and recovering from her illness by spiritual means His heart grew lighter day after day Every evening

did he observe the rooks, in the same order pass along the same track in the heavens just over San Marco and it now occurred to him, after three weeks indeed that Monna Tita had perhaps some strange idea in choosing his monastery, not unconnected with the passage of these birds He grew calmer upon it, until he asked himself whether he might hope In the midst of this half-meditation half dream his whole frame was shaken by the voices however low and gentle, of two monks coming from the villa and approaching him He would have concealed himself under this bank whereon we are standing but they saw him and called him by name He now perceived that the younger of them was Guiberto Oddi, with whom he had been at school about six or seven years ago and who admired him for his courage and frankness when he was almost a child

"Do not let us mortify poor Amadeo" said Guiberto to his companion "Return to the road I will speak a few words to him, and engage him (I trust) to comply with reason and yield to necessity The elder monk who saw he should have to climb the hill again assented to the proposal, and went into the road After the first embraces and few words, 'Amadeo! Amadeo!' said Guiberto it was love that made me a friar let any thing else make you one

"Kind heart!" replied Amadeo "If death or religion, or hatred of me, deprives me of Tita Monalda I will die where she commanded me in the cowl It is you who prepare her then to throw away her life and mine!"

"Hold! Amadeo!" said Guiberto "I officiate together with good Father Fontesecco, who invariably falls asleep amid our holy function

Now, Messer Francesco I must inform you that Father Fontesecco has the heart of a flower It feels nothing it wants nothing it is pure and simple, and full of its own little light. Innocent as a child as an angel nothing ever troubled him but how to devise what he should confess A confession costs him more trouble to invent than any Giornata in my *Decameron* cost me He was once overheard to say on this occasion 'God forgive me in his infinite mercy, for making it appear that I am a little worse than he has chosen I should be! He is temperate, for he never drinks more than exactly half the wine

and water set before him In fact, he drinks the wine and leaves the water saying We have the same water up at San Domenico we send it hither it would be uncivil to take back our own gift and still more to leave a suspicion that we thought other people s wine poor beverage ' Being afflicted by the gravel the physician of his convent advised him as he never was fond of wine to leave it off entirely on which he said, ' I know few things but this I know well in water there is often gravel in wine never It hath pleased God to afflict me, and even to go a little out of his way in order to do it for the greater warning to other sinners I will drink wine, brother Anselmini, and help his work

I have led you away from the younger monk

While Father Fontesecco is in the first stage of beatitude, chanting through his nose the benedicite, I will attempt," said Guiberto, ' to comfort Monna Tita

' Good, blessed Guiberto ! exclaimed Amadeo in a transport of gratitude, at which Guiberto smiled with his usual grace and suavity ' Oh Guiberto ! Guiberto ! my heart is breaking Why should she want you to comfort her '—but—comfort her then ! and he covered his face within his hands.

' Remember ' said Guiberto placidly, " her uncle is bedridden her aunt never leaves him the servants are old and sullen, and will stir for nobody Finding her resolved, as they believe, to become a nun, they are little assiduous in their services Humor her, if none else does, Amadeo , let her fancy that you intend to be a friar , and, for the present, walk not on these grounds

' Are you true, or are you traitorous ? ' cried Amadeo, grasping his friend s hand most fiercely

" Follow your own counsel, if you think mine insincere," said the young friar, not withdrawing his hand, but placing the other on Amadeo s ' Let me, however, advise you to conceal yourself , and I will direct Silvestrina to bring you such accounts of her mistress as may at least make you easy in regard to her health. Adieu '

Amadeo was now rather tranquil , more than he had ever been, not only since the displeasure of Monna Tita, but since the first sight of her Profuse at all times in his gratitude to

Silvestrina, whenever she brought him good news news better than usual, he pressed her to his bosom Silvestrina Pioppi is about fifteen slender fresh intelligent lively good humored sensitive and any one but Amadeo might call her very pretty

Petrarca Ah Giovanni! here I find your heart obtaining the mastery over your vivid and volatile imagination Well have you said the maiden being really pretty any one but Amadeo might think her so On the banks of the Sorga there are beautiful maids the woods and the rocks have a thousand times[3] repeated it I heard but one echo, I heard but one name I would have fled from them for ever at another

Boccaccio Francesco do not beat your breast just now wait a little Monna Tita would take the veil The fatal certainty was announced to Amadeo by his true Guberto, who had earnestly and repeatedly prayed her to consider the thing a few months longer

'I will see her first! By all the saints of heaven I will see her!' cried the desperate Amadeo, and ran into the house, toward the still apartment of his beloved Fortunately Guberto was neither less active nor less strong than he and overtaking him at the moment, drew him into the room opposite 'If you will be quiet and reasonable there is yet a possibility left you said Guberto in his ear although perhaps he did not think it "But if you utter a voice or are seen by any one, you ruin the fame of her you love and obstruct your own prospects for ever It being known that you have not slept in Florence these several nights, it will be suspected by the malicious that you have slept in the villa with the connivance of Monna Tita Compose yourself, answer nothing rest where you are do not add a worse imprudence to a very bad one I promise you my assistance my speedy return, and best counsel you shall be released at day break He ordered Silvestrina to supply the unfortunate youth with the cordials usually administered to the uncle, or with the rich old wine they were made of, and she performed the order with such promptitude and attention that he was soon in some sort refreshed

[3 First ed reads times told me so and I would have fled from them for saying it Giovanni! *thy* could feel it! *Boc a t* Francesco &c.]

Petrarca I pity him from my soul poor young man! Alas we are none of us, by original sin, free from infirmities or from vices

Boccaccio If we could find a man exempt by nature from vices and infirmities we should find one not worth knowing he would also be void of tenderness and compassion What allowances then could his best friends expect from him in their frailties? What help consolation, and assistance in their misfortunes? We are in the midst of a workshop well stored with sharp instruments we may do ill with many unless we take heed and good with all if we will but learn how to employ them

Petrarca There is somewhat of reason in this You strengthen me to proceed with you I can bear the rest

Boccaccio Guiberto had[4] taken leave of his friend, and had advanced a quarter of a mile which (as you perceive) is nearly the whole way on his return to the monastery when he was overtaken by some peasants who were hastening homeward from Florence The information he collected from them made him determine to retrace his steps He entered the room again, and, from the intelligence he had just acquired gave Amadeo the assurance that Monna Vita must delay her entrance into the convent for that the abbess had that moment gone down the hill on her way toward Siena to venerate some holy relics carrying with her three candles each five feet long to burn before them which candles contained many particles of the myrrh presented at the nativity of our Saviour by the wise men of the East. Amadeo breathed freely and was persuaded by Guiberto to take another cup of old wine and to eat with him some cold roast kid which[5] had been offered him for *merenda* * After the agitation of his mind a heavy sleep fell upon the lover, coming almost before Guiberto departed, so heavy indeed that Silvestrina was alarmed It was her apartment and she performed the honors of it as well as any lady in Florence could have done

Petrarca I easily believe it the poor are more attentive than the rich, and the young are more compassionate than the old

[4 From had to He (6 lines added in 2nd ed.]
[5 From which to merenda added in 2nd ed.]
* *Meranda* is luncheon — *merenda* —eaten by the wealthier at the hour when the peasants dine

Boccaccio O Francesco! what inconsistent creatures are we!

Petrarca True indeed! I now foresee the end He might have done worst

Boccaccio I think so

Petrarca He almost deserved it.

Boccaccio I think that too

Petrarca Wretched mortals! our passions for ever lead us into this, or worse

Boccaccio Ay truly much worse generally

Petrarca The very twig on which the flowers grew lately scourges us to the bone in its maturity

Boccaccio Incredible will it be to you and by my faith, to me it was hardly credible Certain however is it that Guiberto on his return by sunrise found Amadeo in the arms of sleep

Petrarca Not at all not at all incredible the truest lover would have done the same exhausted by suffering

Boccaccio He was truly in the arms of sleep but Francesco there was another pair of arms about him worth twenty such divinity as he is A loud burst of laughter from Guiberto did not arouse either of the parties but Monna Tita heard it and rushed into the room tearing her hair and invoking the saints of heaven against the perfidy of man She seized Silvestrina by that arm which appeared the most offending the girl opened her eyes turned on her face, rolled out of bed and threw herself at the feet of her mistress shedding tears, and wiping them away with the only piece of linen about her Monna Tita too shed tears Amadeo still slept profoundly a flush, almost of crimson overspreading his cheeks Monna Tita led away after some pause poor Silvestrina, and made her confess the whole She then wept more and more, and made the girl confess it again and explain her confession "I cannot believe such wickedness she cried 'he could not be so hardened O sinful Silvestrina! how will you ever tell Father Dom one half, one quarter?' He never can absolve you

Petrarca Giovanni, I am glad I did not enter the house you were prudent in restraining me I have no pity for the youth at all never did one so deserve to lose a mistress

Boccaccio Say rather to gain a wife

Petrarca Absurdity! impossibility!

Boccaccio He won her fairly strangely and on a strange table as he played his game Listen! that guitar is Monna Tita's Listen! what a fine voice (do not you think it) is Amadeo's

Amadeo (*singing*)

Oh I have err'd!
I laid my hand upon the nest
(Tita I sigh to sing the rest)
Of the wrong bird

Petrarca She laughs too at it! Ah! Monna Tita was made by nature to live on this side of Fiesole

XIV CHAUCER BOCCACCIO AND PETRARCA[1]

Petrarca You have kept your promise like an English man, Ser* Geoffreddo welcome to Arezzo This gentleman is

[1] It is well known that the meeting of these three poets may have actually occurred In 137 Chaucer visited Florence on a mission from the King Petrarca was then living at Arqua near Padua Boccaccio was also near and the three may easily have met Landor's reason for choosing Arezzo is not clear perhaps he had visited and liked the place Chaucer's line in prologue to the tale of Griseldis show his respect for Petrarca and at least suggest that he had talked with him

I wil yow telle a tale which that I
Lerned at Padowe of a worthy clerk
As proved by his wordes and his werk
He now is dede and nayled in his chest
Now God give his soule wel good rest!
Fraunces Petrarch the laureat poete
Highte this clerk whos rhetorique swete
Enlumynd al Ytail of poetrie

The story put into Chaucer's mouth had of course to Landor a local application He was a Warwickshire man and liked to make fun of the Lucy family as Shakespeare had done before him There is a curious letter from Elizabeth Landor (Life 335) describing the Lucy of that date and his little grandson He is old Lucy exactly He believes the whole world was made for him and in honour of his dignity He opens his round little eyes buttons his round little mouth inflates his round little face and is graver than any owl including his grandpapa (Imag Convers IV 1829 Works I 1846 Works IV 1876)]

* *Ser* is commonly used by Boccaccio and others for *Master*

Messer Giovanni Boccaccio, of whose unfinished *Decameron*, which I opened to you in manuscript, you expressed your admiration when we met at Florence in the spring

Boccaccio I was then at Certaldo my native place filling up my stories and have only to regret that my acquaintance with one so friendly and partial to me has been formed so late

How did Rome answer your expectations sir?

Chaucer I had passed through Pisa of which city the Campo Santo, now nearly finished after half a century from its foundation and the noble street along the Arno * are incomparably more beautiful than any thing in Rome

Petrarca That is true I have heard, however some of your countrymen declare that Oxford is equal to Pisa in the solidity extent and costliness of its structures

Chaucer Oxford is the most beautiful of our cities it would be a very fine one if there were no houses in it.

Petrarca How is that?

Chaucer The lath and plaster white washed houses look despicably mean under the colleges

Boccaccio Few see any thing in the same point of view It would gratify me highly, if you would tell me with all the frankness of your character and your country what struck you most in "*the capital of the world* as the vilest slaves in it call their great open cloaca

Chaucer After the remains of antiquity I know not whether any thing struck me more forcibly than the superiority of our English churches and monasteries

Boccaccio I do not wonder that yours should be richer and better built although I never heard before that they are for the money that is collected in Rome or elsewhere by the pontiffs, is employed for the most part in the aggrandizement of their families Messer Francesco, although he wears the habit of a churchman, speaks plainlier on these subjects than a simple secular as I am, dares to do

Petrarca We may however, I trust, prefer the beauty and variety of our scenery to that of most in the world Tuscany is

* The Corso in Rome is now much finer P Leopold dismantled the walls of Pisa and demolished more than fifty towers and turrets Every year castellated mansions are modernized in Italy

less diversified and, excepting [2] the mountains above Camaldoli and Laverna less sublime than many other parts of Italy yet where does Nature smile with more contented gayety than in the vicinity of Florence? Great part of our sea coast along the Mediterranean is uninteresting yet it is beautiful in its whole extent from France to Massa Afterward there is not a single point of attraction till you arrive at Terracina The greater part of the way round the peninsula from Terracina to Pesaro, has its changes of charms thenceforward all is flat again

Boccaccio We cannot travel in the most picturesque and romantic regions of our Italy from the deficiency of civilization in the people

Chaucer Yet, Messer Giovanni I never journeyed so far through so enchanting a scenery as there is almost the whole of the way from Arezzo to Rome particularly round Terni and Narni and Perugia

Our master, Virgil speaks of dreams that swarm upon the branches of one solitary elm. In this country more than dreams swarm upon every spray and leaf and every murmur of wood or water comes from and brings with it inspiration Never shall I forget the hour when my whole soul was carried away from me by the cataract of Terni, and when all things existing were lost to me in its stupendous waters The majestic woods that bowed their heads before it the sun that was veiling his glory in mild translucent clouds over the furthest course of the river, the moon, that suspended her orb in the very centre of it, —seemed ministering Powers, themselves in undiminished admiration of the marvel they had been looking on through unnumbered ages What are the works of man in comparison with this? What, indeed, are the other works of Nature?

Petrarca [3] Ser Giovanni! this, which appears too great even for Nature, was not too great for man Our ancestors achieved it. Curius Dentatus in his consulate forbade the waters of the Velinus to inundate so beautiful a valley, and threw them down this precipice into the Nar When the traces of all their other victories, all their other labors, shall have disappeared, this work of the earlier and the better Romans shall continue to

[2 From excepting to Laverna added in 2nd ed]
[3 From *Petrarca* to abroad (24 lines) added in 2nd ed]

perform its office shall produce its full effect and shall astonish the beholder as it astonished him at its first completion

Chaucer I was not forgetful that we heard the story from our guide but I thought him a boaster and now for the first time I learn that any great power hath been exerted for any great good Roads were levelled for aggression, and vast edifices were constructed either for pride or policy, to commemorate some victory to reward the Gods for giving it or to keep them in the same temper There is nothing of which men appear to have been in such perpetual apprehension as the inconstancy of the deities they worship

Many thanks Ser Francesco for reminding me of what the guide asserted and for teaching me the truth I thought the fall of the Velinus not only the work of Nature but the most beautiful she had ever made on earth My prevention in regard to the country about Rome was almost as great and almost as unjust to Nature from what I had heard of it both at home and abroad In the approach to the eternal city she seems to have surrendered much of her wildness and to have assumed all her stateliness and sedateness all her wistfulness and severity The vast plain toward the sea abases the soul together with it while the hills on the left, chiefly those of Tusculum and of Tiber overshadow and almost overwhelm it with obscure remembrances some of them descending from the heroic ages, others from an age more miraculous than the heroic the herculean infancy of immortal Rome Soracte comes boldly forward and stands alone Round about on every side we behold an infinity of baronial castles many moated and flanked with towers and bastions many following the direction of the precipitous hills of which they cover the whole summit Tracts of land, where formerly stood entire nations are now the property of some rude baron, descendant of a murderer too formidable for punishment or of a robber too rich for it and the ruins of cities which had sunk in luxury when England was one wide forest are carted off by a herd of slaves and buffaloes to patch up the crevices of a fort or dungeon

Boccaccio Messer Francesco groans upon this and wipes his brow

Petrarca Indeed I do

Three years ago my fancy and hopes were inflamed by what I believed to be the proximity of regeneration Cola Rienzi might have established good and equitable laws even the Papacy, from hatred of the barons would have countenanced the enaction of them hoping at some future time to pervert and subjugate the people as before The vanity of this tribune who corresponded with kings and emperors and found them pliable and ductile, was not only the ruin of himself and of the government he had founded but threw down beyond the chance of retrieving it the Roman name

Let us converse no more about it I did my duty yet our failure afflicts me and will afflict me until my death Jubilees, and other such mummeries are deemed abundant compensation for lost dignity lost power and empire lost freedom and independence We who had any hand in raising up our country from her abject state are looked on with jealousy by those wretches to whom cowardice and flight alone give the titles and rewards of loyalty with sneers and scorn by those who share among themselves the emoluments of office and, lest consolation be altogether wanting with somewhat of well-meaning compassion as weak misguided visionaries by quiet good creatures who would have beslavered and adored us if we had succeeded

The nation that loses her liberty is not aware of her misfortune at the time any more than the patient is who receives a paralytic stroke He who first tells either of them what has happened is repulsed as a simpleton or a churl

Boccaccio When Messer Francesco talks about liberty, he talks loud Let us walk away from the green,* into the cathedral which the congregation is leaving

Petrarca Come, now Giovanni tell us some affecting story, suitable to the gloominess of the place

Boccaccio If Ser Geoffreddo felt in honest truth any pleasure at reading my *Decameron*, he owes me a tithe at least of the stones it contains, for I shall not be so courteous as to tell him that one of his invention is worth ten of mine until I have had all his ten from him if not now another day

Chaucer Let life be spared to me and I will carry the tithe

* The cathedral of Arezzo stands on a green in which are pleasant walks commanding an extensive view

in triumph through my country much as may be shed of the heavier and riper grain by the conveyance and the handling of it And I will attempt to show Englishmen what Italians are how much deeper in thought intenser in feeling and richer in imagination than ever formerly and I will try whether we cannot raise poetry under our fogs and merriment among our marshes We must at first throw some litter about it which those who come after us may remove

Petrarca Do not threaten Ser Geoffreddo! Englishmen act

Boccaccio Messer Francesco is grown melancholy at the spectre of the tribune Relate to us some amusing tale, either of court or war

Chaucer It would ill become me signors to refuse what I can offer and truly I am loath to be silent when a fair occasion is before me of adverting to those of my countrymen who fought in the battle of Cressy as did one or two or more of the persons that are the subjects of my narrative

Boccaccio Enormous and horrible as was the slaughter of the French in that fight and hateful as is war altogether to you and me, Francesco, I do expect from the countenance of Ser Geoffreddo that he will rather make us merry than sad

Chaucer I hope I may the story not wholly nor principally relating to the battle

Sir Magnus Lucy is a knight of ample possessions and of no obscure family in the shire of Warwick one of our inland provinces He was left in his childhood under the guardianship of a mother who loved him more fondly than discreetly Beside which disadvantage there was always wanting in his family the nerve or fluid or whatever else it may be on which the intellectual powers are nourished and put in motion The good Lady Joan would never let him enter the lists at jousts and tournaments to which indeed he showed small inclination nor would she encourage him to practise or learn any martial exercise He was excused from the wars under the plea that he was subject to epilepsy somewhat of which fit or another had befallen him in his adolescence, from having eaten too freely of a cold swan after dinner To render him justice, he had given once an indication of courage A farmer's son upon his estate a few years younger than himself

had become a good player at quarter-staff, and was invited to Charlecote the residence of the Lucys, to exhibit his address in this useful and manly sport The lad was then about sixteen years old, or rather more, and another of the same parish, and about the same standing was appointed his antagonist The sight animated Sir Magnus who seeing the game over and both combatants out of breath called out to Peter Crosby the conqueror, and declared his readiness to engage with him on these conditions First that he should have a helmet on his head with a cushion over it,—both of which he sent for ere he made the proposal, and both of which were already brought to him the one from a buck's horn in the hall the other from his mother's chair in the parlor, secondly that his visor should be down thirdly that Peter should never aim at his body or arms fourthly and lastly, for he would not be too particular that, instead of a cudgel he should use a bulrush enwrapped in the under-coat he had taken off lest any thing venomous should be sticking to it as his mother said there might be, from the spittle or spawn of toads, evets, water-snakes, and adders

Peter scraped back his right foot, leaned forward, and laid his hooked fingers on his brow, not without scratching it —the multiform signification of humble compliance in our country John Crosby the father of Peter was a merry, jocose old man not a little propense to the mischievous He had about him a powder of a sternutatory quality whether in preparation for some trick among his boon companions or useful in the catching of chub and bream as many suspected is indifferent to my story This powder he inserted in the head of the bulrush which he pretended to soften and to cleanse by rubbing, while he instructed his lad in the use and application of it Peter learned the lesson so well, and delivered it so skilfully, that at the very first blow the powder went into the aperture of the visor and not only operated on the nostrils, but equally on the two spherical, horny fish like eyes above it Sir Magnus wailed aloud, dropped his cudgel, tore with great effort (for it was well fastened) the pillow from his helmet, and implored the attendants to embrace him, crying, "Oh Jesu! Jesu! I am in the agonies of death receive my spirit!" John Crosby kicked the ankle of the farmer who sat next him on the turf, and whispered, "He must find it first."

The mischief was attributed to the light and downy particles of the bulrush detached by the unlucky blow and John springing up when he had spoken the words and seizing it from the hand of his son, laid it lustily about his shoulders until it fell in dust on every side crying Scape grace! scape grace! born to break thy father's heart in splinters! Is it thus thou beginnest thy service to so brave and generous a master? Out of my sight!

Never was the trick divulged by the friends of Peter until after his death which happened lately at the battle of Cressy While Peter was fighting for his king and country Sir Magnus resolved to display his wealth and splendor in his native land He had heard of princes and other great men travelling in disguise and under names not belonging to them This is easy of imitation he resolved to try it although at first a qualm of conscience came over him on the part of the Christian name which his godfathers and godmothers had given him but which however was so distinguishing that he determined to lay it aside, first asking leave of three saints praying three groats into the alms box, saying twelve paternosters within the hour and making the priest of the parish drunk at supper He now gave it out by sound of horn that he should leave Charlecote, and travel *incognito* through several parts of England For this purpose he locked up the liveries of his valets and borrowed for them from his tenants the dress of yeomanry Three grooms rode forward in buff habiliments with three led horses well caparisoned. Before noon he reached a small town called Henley in-Arden, as his host at the inn door told him adding, when the knight dismounted that there were scholars who had argued in his hearing whether the name of Arden were derived from another forest so called in Germany or from a puissant family which bore it being earls of Warwick in the reign of Edward the Confessor 'It is the opinion of the Abbot of Tewkesbury and likewise of my very good master him of Evesham said the host, "that the Saxon earls brought over the name with them from their own country, and gave it to the wilder part of their dominions in this of ours

"No such family now cried the knight. "We have driven them out, bag and baggage, long ago, being braver men than they were."

A thought however struck him that the vacant name might cover and befit him in this expedition and he ordered his servants to call him Sir Nigel de Arden

Continuing his march northward he protested that nothing short of the Trent (if indeed that river were not a fabulous one) should stop him nay by the rood not even the Trent itself if there were any bridge over it strong enough to bear a horse caparisoned or any ford which he could see a herd of oxen or a score of sheep fit for the butcher pass across Early on the second morning he was nigh upon twenty miles from home at a hamlet we call Bromwichham, where be two or three furnaces and sundry smiths, able to make a horse shoe in time of need allowing them drink and leisure He commanded his steward to disburse unto the elder of them one penny of lawful coin advising the cunning man to look well and soberly at his steed's hoofs and at those of the other steeds in his company which being done and no repairs being necessary Sir Magnus then proceeded to the vicinity of another hamlet called Sutton Coleheld in which country is a well wooded and well stocked chase, belonging to my dread master the Duke of Lancaster who often taketh his sport therein Here unhappily for the knight were the keepers of the said chase hunting the red and fallow deer The horse of the worshipful knight having a great affection for dogs and inspirited by the prancing and neighing of his fellow creatures about him, sprang forward and relaxed not any great matter of his mettle before he reached the next forest of Cannock, where the buck that was pursued pierced the thickets and escaped his enemies In the village of Cannock was the knight at his extremity, fain to look for other farriery than that which is exercised by the craft in Bromwicham and upon other flesh than horseflesh, and about parts less horny than hoofs however hardened be the same parts by untoward bumps and contusions This farriery was applied by a skilful and discreet leech, while Sir Magnus opened his missal on his bed in the posture of devotion, and while a priest, who had been called in to comfort him, was looking for the penetential psalms of good king David —the only service (he assured Sir Magnus) that had any effect in the removal or alleviation of such sufferings.

When the host at Cannock heard the name of his guest.

"Sblood!" cried he to his son "ride over Emanuel to Longcroft and inform the worshipful youths Humphrey and Henry that one of their kinsmen is come over from the other side of Warwickshire to visit them and has lost his way in the forest through a love of sport"

On his road into Rugeley Emanuel met them together and told them his errand They had heard the horn as they were riding out, had joined the hunt, and were now returning home Indignant at first that any one should take the name of their family they went on asking more and more questions and their anger abated as their curiosity increased Having an abundance of good humor and of joviality in their nature they agreed to act courteously and turn the adventure into glee and joyousness So they went back with Emanuel to his father's at Cannock and were received by the townspeople with much deference and respect The attendants of Sir Magnus observed it and were earnest to see in what manner the adventure would terminate

"Go" said Humphrey "and tell your Master Sir Nigel that his kinsmen are come to pay their duty to him" The clergyman who had been reading the penitential psalms and had afterwards said Mass opened the chamber door for them and conducted them to Sir Magnus They began their compliments by telling him that, although the house at Longcroft was unworthy of their kinsman's reception in the absence of their father —when they were interrupted by the knight who cried aloud in a clear quaver

"Young gentlemen! I have no relative in these parts I come from the very end of Warwickshire Reverend sir priest! I do protest and vow I have no cognizance of these two young gentlemen"

As he spoke the sweat hung upon his brow the cause of which neither the brothers nor the priest could interpret but it really was lest they should have come to dine with him and perhaps have moreover some retinue in the yard Disclaimed so unceremoniously Humphrey de Arden opened a leathern purse and carefully took out his father's letter Whereat the alarm of Sir Magnus increased beyond measure from the uncertainty of its contents, and from the certainty of being discovered as the usurper of a noble name His terrors however were groundless, the letter was this —

Son Humphrey —I grieve that the valet who promised me those three strong geldings, and took moneys thereupon, hath mortally disappointed me for verily we have hard work here, being one against seven or eight * and, if matters go on in this guise I must even fight afoot ere it be long they have killed among them my brave old Black Jack, who had often winnowed them with his broken wind, which was not broken till they broke it The drunken fat rogue that now fails me would rather hunt on Colefield or (if he dare come so near to you) on Cannock, than lead the three good steeds in a halter up Yoxall Lane Whenever ye find him stand within law with him and use whitleather rather than Needwood holly which might provoke the judge and take the three hale nags coming hither with them yourselves, and paying him forthwith three angels due unto him on the feast of Saint Barnabas and that other (St Jude as I am now reminded), if ye have so many if not mortgage a meadow And let this serve as a warrant from your loving father † ††

'What is that to me?' cried in agony Sir Magnus The priest took the letter and shook his head "Sir priest! you see how it stands with us said the knight 'Do deliver me from the lion's den and from the young lions!

'Friend!' said the priest, gravely and sternly I know the mark of Sir Humphrey and the handwriting is my own brother's, who, taking with him in his saddle bag a goose pie and twelve strings of black pudding for Sir Humphrey left his cure at Tamworth but four months ago and joined the army in France, in order to shrive the wounded It is my duty to make known unto the sheriff whatever is irregular in my parish

'Oh, for the love of Christ say nothing to the sheriff! I will confess all," exclaimed the knight

The attendants and many of the customers and country-folks had listened at the door, which was indeed wide open and the priest, being now confirmed in his suspicion by the knight's offer to "confess all, walked slowly through them, mounted his

* Such soon afterward was the disproportion of numbers at the battle of Cressy

† The mark of a knight instead of his name is not be wondered at Out of the thirty six barons who subscribed the Magna Charta, three only signed with their names

palfrey, and rode over to the sheriff at Penkridge The two young gentlemen were delighted on seeing the consternation of Sir Magnus and his company, and encouraged by the familiarity of one among them led him aside and said "It will be well and happy for you if you persuade the others of your party to return home speedily The sheriff is a shrewd severe man and will surely send every soul of you into Picardy, excepting such as he may gibbet on the common for an ensample

Masters! replied the Warwickshire wag "I will return among them and frighten them into the road but you two brave lads shall have your horses and your father his together with such attendants as you little reckon on Are ye for the wars?

'We were going said they gayly "whenever we could raise enough moneys from our father's tenantry for he, much as he desires to have us with him is very loath to be badly equipped and would peradventure see us rather slain in battle, or (what he thinks worse) not in it at all than villanously mounted

"Will ye take me? cried the gallant yeoman

'Gladly answered they both together

Ralph Roebuck was the name of this brave youngster and without another word he ran among his fellows and putting his hand above his ear as our hunters are wont, shouted aloud, "Who's for hanging this fine morning?" "Ralph!" chimed they together somewhat languidly "What dost mean?

'I mean whispered he slowly and distinctly to the nearest, "that the country will be up in half an hour that the priest is gone for the sheriff and that if he went for the devil he could fetch him I never knew a priest at a fault whatever he winded Whosoever has a horse able to carry him is in luck In my mind there will be some heels without a stirrup under them before to morrow kick as they may to find it I must not however be unfaithful to my master, for whom I have spoken a fair word and worn a smiling face, in my perils and tribulations, with these stout young gallants Each o his own bit and bridle the three led chargers let no man touch, on his life For the rest I will be spokesman, in lack of a better May we meet again in Charlecote, at least half the number we set out!'

Away they ran, saddled their horses, and rode off Ralph, who had lately been put in the stocks by his master for drinking

a cup too much and for singing a song by no means dissuasive of incontinence now for the first time began to think of it again, and expected a like repose after less baiting Presently came up a swart thin, fierce little man with four others bearing arms He observing Ralph ordered him to 'stand in the king's name Ralph had been standing and stood, with his arms before him hanging as if they were broken

Varlet and villain! cried the under sheriff for such was the little man 'who art thou?'

"May it please your honor,' answered he submissively, "my name is a real one and my own, such as it is

"And what may it be sirrah!'

'Ralph Roebuck

'Egad! cried the little man starting at it, 'that too sounds like a feigned one Ye are all rogues and vagrants Where are thy fellows?'

"I can answer only for myself, may it please your worship!' said Ralph

"Where is thy leader vagabond! cried the magistrate more and more indignant

"God knows, answered Ralph dolorously

"Has he fled with the rest of his gang?'

"God grant he may ejaculated Roebuck 'rather than hang upon the cursed tree

The under-sheriff then ordered his people to hold Ralph in custody, and went and saluted the two De Ardens who requested that clemency might be shown to every one implicated in an offence so slight.

'We must consider of that, answered the under-sheriff 'Edward a Brocton the priest of Cannock here has given me this letter, which he swears is written by his brother William, priest of Tamworth and marked by your worshipful father The young men bowed "Who is the rogue that defrauded him,' resumed the under sheriff in the three horses, to our lord the king's great detriment and discomfort?'

It was not for them, they replied, to incriminate any one, nor indeed would they knowingly bring any man's blood on their heads, if they could help it

"The impostor in the house shall be examined,' cried the little

man drawing his forefinger along his lips, for they were foamy He went into the room and found the knight in a shower of tears

"Call my varlets! call my rogues!" cried Sir Magnus, wringing his hands and turning away his face

"Rogues!" said the under sheriff "They are gone off and in another county or near upon it else would I hang them all speedily as I will thee by God's pleasure How many horses hast thou in the stable?"

"Sir! good sir! gentle sir! patience a little! Let me think awhile!" said the knight

"Ay ay ay! let thee think forsooth!" scornfully and canorously in well sustained tenor hymned the son of Themis This paper hath told me

"Worthy sir!" said the knight, hear reason! Hear truth and righteousness and justification by faith! Hear a sinner in tribulation in the shadow of death!

'Faith sirrah!' thou art very near the substance if there be any, interposed the under sheriff

'Nay nay! hold, I beseech you! As I have a soul to be saved —

'Pack it up then! pack it up! I will give it a lift when it is ready

'O sir sheriff sir sheriff! I am disposed to swear on the rood I am not, and never was Sir Nigel de Arden

At these words the under sheriff laughed bitterly and said "Nor I neither and, going out of the room ordered a guard to stand at the door

Henry then took him by the arm and said softly Gildart! do not be severe with the poor young man below It is true he is in the secret which he swears he will not betray if he dies for it but he promises us the three horse without trial or suit or trouble or delay and hopes you will allow his master to leave the kingdom in peace and safety under his conduct, promising to serve the king, together with us faithfully in his wars

"We could not do better" answered the under-sheriff 'if we were certain the fellow and his gang would not waylay and murder you on the road

"Never fear!" cried Henry 'As we shall have other attendants, and are neither less strong nor (I trust) less courageous than he we will venture, with your leave and permission

This was given in writing The under sheriff ordered his guards to bring down the culprit, who came limping and very slow

"Pity he cannot feign and counterfeit a little better on the spur of the occasion!" said the under sheriff "He well answers the description of fat and lazy as for drunken, it shall not be to day on Cannock ale or Burton beer

When the knight had descended the stairs, and saw Ralph Roebuck he shrieked aloud with surprise and gladness "O thou good and faithful servant! enter into the joy of thy lord!

God's blood! cried Ralph "I must enter then into a thing narrower than a weasel's or a wasp's hole To what evil have you led us?"

"Now you can speak for me!" said the knight

Ralph shook his head and sighed "It will not do, master! I am resolved to keep my promise, which you commanded upon first setting out though it may cost me limb or life Master, one word in your ear

No whisperings! no connivances! no plans or projects of escape!" cried the guard They helped Sir Magnus into his saddle with more than their hands and arms which instead of officiousness he thought an indignity, though it might be the practice of those parts The two De Ardens mounted two of the richly caparisoned steeds the third was led by their servant, who went homeward with those also which they had ridden for what was necessary, being ordered to rejoin them at Lichfield Ralph Roebuck sat alert on his own sorrel palfrey a quick and active one, with open transparent nostrils He would as became him, have kept behind his master if the knight had not called him to his side, complaining that the length and roughness of the roads had shaken his saddle so as to make it uneven and uneasy Many and pressing were the offers of Ralph to set it right Sir Magnus shook his head, and answered that 'man is born to suffering as the sparks fly upward'

"I could wish, sir" said Ralph, "if it did not interfere with higher dispensations"—

"The very word, Ralph! the very word! thou rememberest it! I could not bring it nicely to mind Several Sundays have passed since we heard it. Well! what couldst thou wish?"

"That your worship had under you at this juncture the cushion

of our late good Lady Joan which might serve you now some what better than it did at the battle of the bulrush We all serve best in our places

"By our lady! Ralph! I never saw a man so much improved by his travels as thou art What shall we both be ere we reach home again?'

Ralph persuaded his master how much better it were that his worship did not return too speedily among the cravens and re creants who had deserted him and who probably would be pursued and then what a shame and scandal it would be, if such a powerful knight as Sir Magnus should see them dragged from his own hall and from under his own eyes to prison If by any means it could be contrived to prolong the journey a few days it would be a blessing and the De Ardens it might be hoped would say nothing of the matter to the sheriff Sir Magnus felt that his importance would be lowered by the seizure of his servants, in his presence and under his roof and he had other reasons for wishing to ride leisurely in which his more active companions little participated On their urging him to push forward, he complained that his horse had been neglected and had neither tasted oat nor bean, nor even sweet meadow hay at Cannock His company expressed the utmost solicitude that this neglect should be promptly remedied and grieving that the next stage was still several miles distant, offered, and at the same time exerted, their best services in bringing the hungry and loitering steed to a trot Sir Magnus now had his shrewd suspicions, he said, that the saddle had been ill looked to, and doubted whether a nail from behind might not somehow have dropped lower When he would have cleared up his doubts by the agency of his hand, again the whip applied to his flinching steed disturbed the elucidation and his knuckles, instead of solving the knotty point, only added to its nodosity 'At last he cried 'Roebuck! Roebuck! gently, softly! If we go on at this rate, in another half hour I shall be black and bloody as ever rook was that dropped ill-fledged from the rookery

"The Lord hath well speeded our flight,' said Ralph relenting "he hath delivered us from our enemies What miles and miles have we travelled, to all appearance, in a few hours!

"Not many hours indeed," answered the knight, still pondering. "What is yon red spire?' added he

'The Tower of Babel' replied Ralph composedly.

"I cannot well think it," muttered Sir Magnus in suspense. "They would never have dared to rebuild it, after God's anger thereupon."

It was the spire of Lichfield cathedral.

When they entered the city they found there some hundreds of French prisoners taken in the late skirmishes who were chattering and laughing and boasting of their invincibility. Their sun burned faces, their meagre bodies, their loud cries, and the violence our surly countrymen expressed at not being understood by them, although as natives of Lichfield they spoke such good English, removed in part the doubts of Sir Magnus, even before he heard our host cry "By God! a very Babel!" Later in the evening came some Welshmen having passed through Shropshire and Cheshire with mountain sheep for the fair the next morning. These two were unintelligible in their language and different from the others. They quarrelled with the French for mocking them, as they thought. Sir Magnus expressed his wonder that an Englishmen, which the host was should be found in such a far country among the heathen; albeit some of them spoke English not being able for their hearts and souls to do otherwise since all the languages in the world were spoken there as a judgment on the ungodly. He confessed he had always thought Babel was in another place, though he could not put his finger upon it exactly. Nothing he added, so clearly proved the real fact as that the sheep themselves were misbegotten and black-faced, and several of them altogether tawny like a Moor's head he had seen he told them in the chancel window of Saint Mary's at Warwick. 'Which reminds me, said the pious knight, "that the hour of Angelus must be at hand, and, beside the usual service, I have several forms of thanksgiving to run through before I break bread again."

It was allowed him to go alone upstairs for his devotions, in which [illegible] will have observed, he was very regular. Meanwhile the [illegible] and his two daughters, two buxom wenches, were [illegible] into the secret, and it was agreed that at supper all [illegible] talk a jargon, by degrees more and more confused, and [illegible] every imaginable mistake should be made in execution [illegible]s of the company. The girls entered heartily

into the device, and the rosy faced father gave them hints and directions while the supper was being cooked Sir Magnus came down, after a time, covered with sweat He protested that the heat of the climate in these countries was intolerable particularly in his bedroom that indeed he had felt it before in the open air, but only on certain portions of the body which certain stars have an influence upon and not at all in the face

The oven had been heated just under the knight's bed in order to supply loaves for the farmers and drovers the following day

Supper was now served bread however was wanting The knight desired one of the young women to give him some She looked at him in astonishment shrank back blushed and hid her face in her apron The father came forward furiously and said many words or rather uttered many sounds, which Sir Magnus could not understand He requested his attendant Ralph to explain Ralph made a few attempts at English and failing in it spoke very fluently another tongue The father and his daughters stared one at another and brought a bucket of hot water with a square of soap then a goose's wing then a sack of grey peas then a blackbird in a cage then a mustard pot then a handful of brown paper then a pair of white rabbits hanging by the ears Sir Magnus now addressed the other girl She appeared more willing to comply and making a sign at her father, whose back was turned in his anxiety to find what was called for as if she would be kinder still when he was out of the way laid her arm across the neck of the knight, and withdrew it hesitatingly and timidly At this instant a great dog entered allured by the smell of the meat The knight's lips quivered and the first accents he uttered audibly and distinctly were,—"Seeking whom he may devour Then falling on his knees, he cried aloud, 'O Lord! thy mercies are manifold! I am a sinner

The girl trembled from head to foot, ready to burst with the laughter she was suppressing and kissed her father, and appeared to implore his pardon He pushed her back and cried 'Away! I saw thee! I saw thee with these very eyes!' clenching his fist and striking his brow frantically 'I saw thy shadow upon the wall No wickedness is hidden

"The hand writing! the hand writing!—That was upon the wall, too! perhaps upon this very one, exclaimed the conscience-

stricken and aghast Sir Magnus He fell on his knees and praised the Lord for allowing to the host again the use of his mother tongue for the salvation of him a sinner if indeed it were not the Lord himself who spake by the lips of his servant in the words, 'No wickedness is hidden After a prayer, he protested that although indeed his heart was corrupt, as all hearts were the devil had failed to inflame him universally Not one knew what he said Humphrey laughed and nodded assent, Henry offered him baked apples Ralph brushed his doublet-sleeve

Before it was light in the morning the horses were at the door nobody appeared no money had been paid or demanded nevertheless it seemed an inn They mounted they mused they feared to meet each other's eyes at last Ralph addressed one of the De Ardens in a low voice but so as to be heard by his master The two brothers tried each a monosyllable Ralph shook his head and they looked despondently Attempts were renewed at intervals for several miles when suddenly a distant bell was heard probably from the cathedral, and Humphrey cried 'Matins! matins!' At this moment all spoke English perfectly and the knight uttered many fervent ejaculations The others related their sufferings and visions, and when they had ended Sir Magnus said he seemed to hear throughout the night the roaring of a fiery furnace for all the world like King Nebuchadnezzar's, only that sinful bodies and not righteous ones, were moved and shoved backward and forward in it, until their bones grated like iron, and until his own teeth chattered so in his head he could hear them no longer

His conductor was careful to avoid the county of Warwick, lest any one should recognise the knight little as was the chance of it for he never had been further from home than at Warwick, and there but twice, the distance being five good miles. On his way toward the coast, he wondered to find the stars so very like those at Charlecote, and some of them seemed to know him and wink at him He thought indeed here were a good many more of them awake and stirring because he had been longer out of doors than he had ever been before, at night Slowly as he would have travelled, if he had been allowed his own way, on the sixth morning from his adventure at Cannock he had come

within sight of the coast To his questions no other answer was returned than that the times were unquiet that the roads were infested with robbers and that the orders of a sheriff were as a king's In the afternoon the travellers descended the narrow hollöway that leads into the seaport town of Hastings Ralph pointed at some sailors who were stepping into a boat and cried 'Master! what do you think of these?'

"I think, Roebuck, answered he after pondering some moments, that they are like unto those who go down into the great waters

The De Ardens were conveying their stores and horses aboard to lose no time when Ralph whispered in the ear of the knight 'Sir knight! do not for the love of Christ! do not venture with those two dare devils any further Let us take only a small boat just large enough to enter the Avon There is a short cut hereabout if we could find it For six pieces of gold we may hire as many sailors to hazard their liberties and lives for us and see us safe at home again

"Six[4] pieces of gold!" repeated Sir Magnus very slowly and distinctly 'six pieces of gold in these hard times go well nigh to purchase an acre of pasture land

"True replied Roebuck, with a hundred of sand and a thousand of sea thrown in, as hoof and shank to a buttock of beef

"Indeed! interjected Sir Magnus Why then would not it be better to look out for some such investment of said moneys and to get the indentures fairly engrossed forthwith?'

"Investment! indentures!" cried Ralph "Master! it is well for those who can carry by land and sea such fine learned words about with em which are enough to show a man's gentility all the world over

It is uncertain whether Sir Magnus heard him, for he continued to utter and repeat the substance of his reflections

"What a quantity of fishes there must be in a thousand acres of deep salt water, being well looked to! Rats and otters might sneeze their hearts out before they could catch a fin with the brine and foam bobbing up everlastingly and buffeting their

[4 From Six to 'hundreds (33 lines) added in 2nd ed.]

whiskers and the poachers must buy lime-kilns and forests and mines of pure poison if they would make the fish drunk at the bottom Furthermore there never could be a lack of sand at Charlecote these twenty years to come for kitchen or scullery or walk before the hall-windows or repairs of cow house or dove-cot and many a cart load would be lying in store for sale

There is great foresight and cleverness in all this, said Ralph and if your worship had only six gold pieces in the world no time ought to be lost in running with 'em seaward But to my foolishness three for life and three for liberty seem reasonable enough Pirates and even fur fighting enemies, such as those gentlemen over the way demand for a knight's ransom as many hundreds

The knight drew back and hesitated

Well, sir! said Ralph the business is none of mine I have been let go ere now for an old song when I had angered my man here I have angered nobody I am safe anywhere, and welcome in most places

'I am fain to learn that old song of his, said the knight inaudibly

Roebuck continued I have no hill with antlers in it I would rather eat a sucking-pig than a swan and a griskin than a heron and I can do either with good will about noon any day in seven barring Friday and without mounting up three long steps that run across the room, or resting my feet on a dainty mat of rushes. A good blazing kitchen fire is enough for me [6] I care neither for bucks nor partridges As for spiced ale at christenings and weddings I may catch a draught of it when it passes Sack I have heard of poor tipple, I doubt that wants sweetening But a horn of home brewed beer frothing leisurely, and humming lowly its contented tune is suitable to my taste and condition, and I envy not the great and glorious who have a goose with a capon in his belly on the table, or even a peacock his head as good as alive and the proudest of his feathers to crown him"

The knight answered, "Somehow I do not like to part with

[5 From Well to rushes (12 lines) added in 2nd ed]
[6 First ed reads me and Ralph I &c]
[7 From or to him (2 lines) added in 2nd ed]

my gold I never saw any in coinage till last Easter * and it seems so fresh and sunshiny and pleasant I would keep it to look at in dimp weather Pay the villets in groats

'Sir Knight' replied Ralph, do not let them see your store of groats which are very handy, and sundry of these likewise are quite new

'Nobody would pay away new groats that could help it sighed Sir Magnus.

'The gold must go and make room for more said Roebuck The knight answered nothing but turning round lest anybody should notice his capacious and well stored scrip he drew forth the six pieces and after a doubt and a trial with his thumb and finger whether by reason of their roughness two peradventure might not stick together and make seven he placed them in the palm of Roebuck, who took them with equal silence and less uncertainty Great contentment was manifested by the worshipful knight that the two De Ardens had left him and he ate a good dinner and drank a glass of Rhenish which he said was pure sour and presently was anxious to go aboard the boat, if it was ready Ralph conducted him to it and helped him in The rowers for some time played their parts lustily and then hoisted sail Roebuck asked the oldest of them whether the wind was fair Passably said he, but unless we look sharp we may be carried into the Low Countries

'I do not see anywhere that short cut nor that brook which runs into the Avon said Sir Magnus As for the Low Countries, no fear of them the water rises before us and we mount higher and higher every moment insomuch that I begin to feel as if I were going up in a swing like that between the elms

Presently Old Ocean exacted from him his tribute, which the powerfullest not of knights only and barons but of princes and kings, must pay him in his own dominions, bending their heads and stretching out their arms and acknowledging his supremacy with tears and groans He now fancied he had been poisoned on shore and was confirmed in his belief when Roebuck hummed a tune without any words to it, prodigal and profuse as he was of

* The first gold coined in England came out rather more than a year before this time that is in 1344 the quantity was small and probably the circulation not rapid nor extensive

them on ordinary occasions and when neither he nor any of the sailors would bring him such a trifle as water gruel sweetened with clary wine or camomile flowers picked with the dew upon them and simmered in fair spring-water and in an earthen pan, or viperbroth with a spoonful of Venice treacle in it stirred with the tusk of a wild-boar in the first quarter of the moon the only things he asked them for Soon however his pains abated yet he complained that his eyesight was so affected he seemed to see nothing but greenish water like leek porridge albeit by his reckoning they must now be near the brook

'Methinks said he, we are running after that great white ship yonder

'Methinks so too, answered Ralph crying 'How is this?" with apparent anger to the sailors

It cannot be otherwise said one of them the boat is the brig's own daughter what mortal can keep them asunder! You might as well hope to hold tight by your teeth a two months calf from its dam

'Why didst not thou see to that Ralph?' cried the knight in the bitterness of his soul Always rash and imprudent!

Roebuck attempted to console his master with the display of the honors that would be shown him aboard the brig when his quality should be discovered Then, taking advantage of a shoal of porpoises that rolled and darted in every direction round the boat, he showed them to Sir Magnus who turned pale at seeing them so near him Never be frightened at a parcel of bots! cried Roebuck

'Bots! what those vast creatures?

"Ay surely, said one of the sailors 'The sea horses avoid them by millions in a moment you may sometimes see a thousand of them sticking on a single hair of their tails

'Do those horses come within sight then?' said Sir Magnus, tremulously

'Only when they are itchy answered the mariner, 'and then they contrive to slip between a boat and a brig, and crack a couple or three at a time of those troublesome little insects'

Sir Magnus said something to himself about the wonders of the great deep, and praised God for having kept hitherto such a breed of bots out of his stables. He began to see clearly how

fitted everything is to the place it occupies and how certainly these creatures were created to be killed between brigs and boats

Meditations must have their end, though they reach to heaven

Great as had been the consternation of Sir Magnus at the sight of the porpoises and at the probability that a hair of some stray marine horse, covered over with them might be between him and the river,—greater still was it if possible at approaching the brig and discerning the two De Ardens What can they want with me? cried he I am resolved not to go home with them

Roebuck raised his spirits by swearing that nothing of the kind should happen while he had a drop of blood in his veins Hark! Sir Knight! said he Observe how the two young gentlemen are behaving

Gayly indeed did they accost him and imperiously cried they to the crew, Make way for Sir Magnus Lucy!

Behold sir, your glorious name hath already manifested itself said Ralph

A rope ladder was let down and the brothers knelt and inclined their bodies and offered their hands to aid him in mounting "Here are honors paid to my master!" said Roebuck exultingly Sir Magnus himself was highly gratified with his reception and resolved to defer his interrogatory on the course they seemed to be taking He was startled at dinner time when the captain with strange familiarity entitled him Sir Mag The following words were even more offensive for when the ship rolled somewhat though moderately the trencher of Sir Magnus fell into his lap and the captain cried 'Nay nay Sir Mag! as much into gullet as gullet will hold but clap nothing below the girdle He protested he had no design to secrete anything The sailors played and punned as low men are wont, on his family name and on his asking what the fellows meant by their impudence, a scholar from Oxford of whom he inquired at one who liked the logic of princes better than that of pedants told him they wished to express by their words and gestures that he was, in the phrase of Horace *ad unguem factus*

"I do not approve of any phrases answered he somewhat proudly, "and pray, sir, tell them so'

"Sir!" said Roebuck in his ear "although you may be somewhat disappointed in the measure of respect paid to you aboard, you will be compensated on landing."

Sir Magnus thought hereby that his tenants would surely bring him pullets and chines. As they approached the coast. "I told you, sir!" exclaimed he. "Look at the bonfire on the very edge of the sands!—they could not make it nearer you. A fire was blazing, and there were loud *huzzas* as the ship entered the port.

"I would still be *incog.* if possible," said Sir Magnus hollowing his cheeks and voice and recovering to himself a great part of his own estimation. "Give the good men this money, and tell them in future not to burn a serviceable boat for me in want of brushwood. I will send them a cart load of it another time on due application."

The people were caulking a fishing smack: they took the money, hooted at Sir Magnus and turned again to their labor.

After the service of the day the King of England was always pleased to watch the ships coming over, to observe the soldiers debarking and to learn the names of the knights and esquires who successively crossed the channel. He happened to be riding at no great distance and ordered one of his attendants to go and bring him information of the ship and her passengers particularly as he had seen some stout horses put ashore. This knight was an intimate friend of De Arden the father and laughed heartily at the adventure, as related by Humphrey. He repeated it to the king word for word as nearly as he could. "Marry!" said the king, "three fat horses with a bean-field (I warrant) in each, are but an inadequate price for such a name. I doubt whether we have another among us that was in any degree noble before the Norman conquest. We ourselves might have afforded three decent ones in recompense for the dominion and property of nearly one whole county, and that county the fairest in England. Let the boys make the knight show his prowess as some of his family have done. I observe they ride well, and have the prudence to exercise their horses on their first debarking, lest they grow stiff and lose their appetite. Tell them I shall be glad to hear of them, and then to see them."

Sir Magnus, the moment he set foot on shore, was wel-

cometh to land by Roebuck 'No no! rogue Ralph!' said he nodding. 'I know the Avon when I see it. Here we are. None of your mummery good people,' cried he somewhat angrily when several ragged Frenchmen, women and children asked him for charity. "We will have no Babel here by God's blessing."

Soon came forward two young knights and told him it was the king's pleasure he should pitch his tent above *Eu* on the right of this same river *Brete*.

"Youngsters!" cried he arrogantly "I shall pitch nothing, neither tent (whatever it may be) nor quoit nor bar. Know ye I am Sir Magnus Lucy of Charlecote."

The young knights unceremoniously as he had treated them bowed profoundly and said they bore the king's command leaving the execution of it to his discretion.

'The king's' repeated he. 'What have I done?' Has that skipping squirrel of an under sheriff been at the king's ear about me?'

They could not understand him and telling him that it would be unbecoming in them to investigate his secrets made again their obeisance and left him. He then turned toward Ralph, the polar star in every ambiguity of his courses.

Honored master Sir Magnus!' answered Ralph let no strife be between us, nor ill blood that alway maketh ill counsels boil uppermost in the pot.

"Roebuck!' said the knight surveying him with silent admiration, now speakest thou soundly and calmly for thou hast taken time in the delivery thereof and communed with thyself before thou didst trust the least trustworthy of thy members. But I do surmise from thy manner and from the thing spoken that thou hast somewhat within thee which thou wouldst utter yet.'

"Worshipful sir!' subjoined Ralph, although I do not boast of my services—as who would?'—yet, truth is truth. I have saved your noble neck from the gallows forasmuch as you took a name worshipful sir which neither king nor father ever gave you, and which belongeth to others rightfully. Now if both the name and the horses had been found at once upon you, a miracle only could have saved you from that bloody-

minded under-sheriff Providential was it for you Sir Knight, that those two young gentlemen whether in mercy they counterfeited the letter —

"No no no! the priest's own brother wrote it the priest deposed to the handwriting

"Then said Ralph calmly, lifting up the palms of his hands towards Sir Magnus let us praise the Lord!"

'Hey day? Ralph! why! art even thou grown devout? Verily this is a great mercy a great deliverance I doubt whether the best part of it (praised be the Lord nevertheless!) be not rather for thee than for such a sinner as I am For thou hast lost no horse and yet art touched as if thou hadst lost a stud thou hast not suffered in the flesh and yet thy spirit is very contrite

'Master! said Ralph, "only one thing is quite plain to me which is that Almighty God decrees we should render our best services to our country Your three horses followed you for idle pomp vanity prompted you to appear what you are not

'Very wrong Ralph!

And yet Sir Magnus if you had not committed this action which in your pious and reasonable humility you call very wrong, perhaps three gallant youths (for Sir Magnus Lucy by God's grace shall be the third) had remained at home in that sad idleness which leads to an unprivileged and tongue-tied old age We are now in France —

'Ralph! Ralph! said Sir Magnus be serious still Faith! I can hardly tell when thou art and when thou art not, being so unsteady a creature

"Sir Magnus I repeat it, we are now in Normandy or Picardy, I know not rightly which where the king also is and where it would be unseemly if any English knight were not The eyes of England and of France are fixed upon us Here we must all obey the lofty as well as the humble'

"Obey? ay, to be sure, Ralph! Thou wilt obey me thou art not great enough to obey the king, therefore set not thy heart upon it.

Ralph smiled and replied, "I offered my service to the young De Ardens, which they graciously accepted As however they

have their own servants with 'em, if you my honored master can trust me who have more than once deceived you but never to your injury I will with their permission continue to serve you, and that right faithfully Whatever is wanting to the dignity of your appearance is readily purchased in this country from the many traffickers who follow the camp and from the great abundance of Normandy So numerous too are the servants who have lost their masters, you may find as many as your rank requires, or your fortune can maintain There are handier men among them than I am and I do not ask of you any place of trust above my betters Such as I am, either take me Sir Magnus, or leave me with the two brave lads

'Ralph!' answered the knight 'I cannot do without thee since I am here as it seems I am!' and he sighed About those servants that have lost their masters—I wish thou couldst have held thy peace I would not fain have such unlucky varlets But some of these masters let us hope may be found Thou dost not mean they are dead that is killed!'

Missing said Ralph consolatorily

'I thought so I corrected thee at the time Now my three horses the king being here if thou speakest truth I can have them up by *certiorari* at his Bench

They would be apt to leap it I trow replied Ralph, with such riders upon their backs Master be easy about them!

Ismael is very powerful he could carry me anywhere in reason said Sir Magnus

Do not let the story get wind answered his counsellor, 'lest we never hear the end of it I promise you my worthy master you shall have Ismael again after the wars

He will have longer teeth and fewer marks in his mouth, before that time said sorrowfully Sir Magnus

"No bridle can hold him when he is wilful replied Ralph "and although peradventure he might carry your worship clean through the enemy once or twice, yet Ismael is not the horse to be pricked and goaded by pikes and arrows without rearing and plunging and kicking off helmets by the dozen nine ells from the ground Let those Staffordshire lads break him in and bring him home

"Tell them so! tell them so!" said Sir Magnus rubbing

his hands. And find me one very strong and fleet and very tractable, and that will do anything rather than plunge and rear at being pricked if such bloody times should ever come over again in the world for as I never yet gave any man cause to mock at me I will do my utmost to make all reverent of me, now I am near the king Thus he spoke being at last well aware that he was indeed in France, although he was yet perplexed in spirit in regard to his having been at Babel

However, some time afterward he was likewise cured of this scepticism, as by degrees men will be on such points if they seek the truth in humility of spirit Conversing one day with Roebuck on past occurrences he said after a pause Ralph! I have confessed unto thee many things as thou likewise hast confessed many unto me the which manner of living and communing was very pleasant to the gentle saints Paul and Timothy And now I do indeed own that I have seen men in these parts beyond sea and doubt not that there be likewise such in others who in sundry matters have more of worldly knowledge than I have,—knowledge, I speak of not of understanding In the vanity of my heart having at that time seen little, I did imagine and surmise that Babel lay wider of us albeit I could not upon oath or upon honor say where or whereabout It pleased the Lord to enlighten me by signs and tokens and not to leave me for the corn of the heathen and the derision of the ungodly Had I minded his word somewhat more when in my self sufficiency I thought I had minded little else and knew it off hand I should have remembered that we pray every Sabbath for the peace of Jerusalem and of Sion and of Israel meaning thereby (as the priest admonishes the simpler of the congregation) our own country albeit other names have been given in these latter days to divers parts thereof By the same token I might have apprehended that Babel lay at no vast distance

Roebuck listened demurely, smacking his lips at intervals like a carp out of pond and looking grave and edified Tired however with this geographical discursion burred and briared and braked with homilies he reminded his master that no time was to be lost in looking for a gallant steed, worthy to bear a knight of distinction "My father, said he "made a song for himself,

in readiness at fair or market when he had a sorry jade to dispose of —

> Who sells a good nag
> On his leg may fat,
> Until his heart be weary
> Who buy a good nag
> And hath great in his bag,
> May ride the world over full cheery

"Comfortable thoughts both of 'em!" said Sir Magnus. "I never sold my nags and I have groats enow—if nobody do touch the same. Not knowing well the firms about this country, and the day being more windy than I could wish it, and proposing still to remain for awhile incognito and being somewhat soiled in my apparel by the accidents of the voyage, and furthermore my eyes having been stunned thereby a slight matter it would please me Roebuck if thou wentest in search of the chargers the troublesome part of looking at his quarters and handling him and disbursing the moneys I myself may by God's providence bring unto good issue."

Ralph accepted the commission and performed it faithfully and amply. He returned with two powerful chargers magnificently caparisoned and told his master that he would grieve to the day of his death if he let either of them slip through his fingers. Sir Magnus first asked the prices and then the names of them. He was informed that one was called Rufus and the other Beauclerc, after two great English kings. Enquiring of Ralph the history of these English kings and whether he had ever heard of them and on the confession of Ralph in the negative, he was vexed and discontented and told Ralph he knew nothing. The owner of the horses was very fluent in the history of the two princes which nearly lost him his customer; for the knight shook his head saying he should be sorry to mount a beast of such an unlucky name as Rufus above all in a country where arrows were so rife. As for Beauclerc he was unexceptionable.

"A horse indeed!" cried Roebuck 'in my mind sir! Ismael is not fit to hold a candle to him.'

'I would not say so much as that' gravely and majestically replied the knight 'but this Beauclerc has his points, Roebuck.' Sir Magnus purchased the two horses, and acquired into the bargain the two pages of history appertaining to their names.

which proud as he was of displaying them on all occasions, he managed less dexterously Before long he heard on every side the most exalted praises of Humphrey and Henry and although he was by no means invidious he attributed a large portion of the merit to Ismael and appealed to Rochuck whether he did not once hear him say that Jacob too would show himself one day or other Stimulated by the glory his horses had acquired, horses bred upon his own land and by the notice they had attracted from our invincible Edward under two mere striplings of half his weight he himself within a week or fortnight was changed in character Sloth and inactivity were no longer endurable to him He exercised his chargers and himself in every practice necessary to the military career and at last being presented to the king, Edward said to him that, albeit not being at Westminster nor having his chancellor at hand he could not legally enforce the payment of the three angels still due (he understood) as part of the purchase money of sundry chargers nevertheless he would oblige the gallant knight who bought them to present him on due occasion a pair of spurs for his acquittance

The ceremony was not performed in the presence of the king whose affairs required him elsewhere but in the presence of his glorious son after the battle of Cressy Here Sir Magnus was surrounded and perhaps would have fallen being still inexpert in the management of his arms when suddenly a young soldier, covered with blood, rushed between him and his antagonist, whom he levelled with his battle-axe and fell exhausted Sir Magnus had received many bruises through his armor, and noticed but little the event many similar ones or nearly so, having occurred in the course of the engagement Soon however that quarter of the field began to show its herbage again in larger spaces and at the distant sound of the French trumpets which was shrill, fitful, and tuneless the broken ranks of the enemy near him waved like a tattered banner in the wind and melted, and disappeared Ralph had fought resolutely at his side and, though wounded, was little hurt. The knight called him aloud at his voice not only Ralph came forward but the soldier who had preserved his life rolled round toward him Disfigured as he was with blood and bruises, Ralph knew him again it was Peter Crosby of the bulrush. Sir Magnus did not find immediately the

words he wanted to accost him and indeed, though he had become much braver, he had not grown much more courteous much more generous or much more humane He took him however by the hand thanked him for having saved his life and hoped to assist in doing him the same good turn

Roebuck in the mean time washed the several wounds of his former friend and playmate, from a cow's horn containing wine of which as he had reserved it only against thirst in battle, few drops were left Gashes opened from under the gore which made him wish that he had left it untouched and he drew in his breath as if he felt all the pain he awakened

Well meant Ralph! but prythee give over! said Crosby patiently These singings in my head are no merry makings 'Master!—if you are there—I would liefer have lain in Hampton churchyard among the skittles or as near them as might be, or as not to spoil the sport and methinks had it been a score or two of years later it were none the worse However soever God's will be done! Greater folks have been eaten here by the dogs Well aday and what harm? Dogs at any time are better beasts than worms and should be served first They love us and watch us and help us while we are living the others don't mind us while we are good for anything There are chaps too and feeding in clover, who think much as they do upon that matter

"Give me thy hand Ralph! Tell my father I have done my best If thou findest a slash or two athwart my back and loins swear to him as thou safely mayest do on all the Gospels and on any bone of my martyr, that they closed upon me and gave them when I was cutting my way through—aweary with what had been done already—to lend my last service—to our worthy master

Now Messer Francesco I may call upon you, having seen you long since throw aside your gravity and at last spring up alert as though you would mount for Picardy

Petrarca A right indeed have you acquired to call upon me Ser Geoffreddo but you must accept from me the produce of our country Brave men appear among us every age almost yet all of them are apt to look to themselves none will hazard his life for another none will trust his best friend Such is our

breed such it always was In affairs of love alone have we as great a variety as you have, and perhaps a greater I am by nature very forgetful of light occurrences even of those which much amused me at the time and if your greyhound, Messer Geoffreddo had not been laying his muzzle between my knees urging my attention shivering at the cold of this unmatted marble and treading upon my foot in preference I doubt whether you would ever have heard from me the story I shall now relate to you

It occurred the year before I left Avignon the inhabitants of which city, Messer Giovanni will certify are more beautiful than any others in France

Boccaccio I have learned it from report and believe it readily so many Italians have resided there so long and, the very flower of Italy amorous poets stout abbots indolent priests high fed cardinals handsome pages gigantic halberdiers and crossbow-men for ever at the mark

Petrarca Pish! pish! let me find my way through em and come to the couple I have before my eyes, and the spaniel that was the prime mover in the business

Tenerin de Gisors knew few things in the world and if he had known all therein he would have found nothing so valuable, in his own estimation as himself The ladies paid much court to him, and never seemed so happy as in his presence this disquieted him

Boccaccio How the deuce! he must have been a saint then which accords but little with his vanity

Petrarca You might mistake there Giovanni! The observation does not hold good in all cases I can assure you

Boccaccio Well, go on with him

Petrarca I do think, Giovanni, you tell a story a great deal more naturally, but I will say plainly what my own eyes have remarked and will let the peculiarities of men appear as they strike me, whether they are in symmetry with our notions of character, or not

Chaucer The man of genius may do this no other will attempt it. He will discover the symmetry the relations, and the dependencies, of the whole he will square the strange problematic circle of the human heart

Pardon my interruption and indulge us with the tale of Tenerin

Petrarca He was disquieted I repeat by the gayety and familiarity of the young women who truly to speak betray at Avignon no rusticity of reserve Educated in a house where music and poetry were cultivated he had been hearing from his earliest days the ditties of broken hearts and desperation and never had he observed that these invariably were sung under leering eyes, with smiles that turned every word upside down and were followed by the clinking of glasses a hearty supper and *what not!* Beside[8] he was very handsome men of this sort although there are exceptions are usually cold toward the women and he was more displeased that they should share the admiration which he thought due to himself exclusively than pleased at receiving the larger part of theirs

At Avignon as with us certain houses entertain certain parties It is thought unpolite and inconstant ever to go from one into another I do not mean in the same evening, but in your lifetime and only the religious can do it without reproach As bees carry and deposit the fecundating dust of certain plants so friars and priests the exhilarating tales of beauty and the hardly less exhilarating, of frailty covering it deeply with pity and praising the mercy of the Lord in permitting it for an admonition to others

There are two sisters in our city (I forgot myself in calling Avignon so) of whom among friends I may speak freely and may even name them Cynilla de la Haye, and Egidia Cynilla the younger is said to be extremely beautiful I never saw her and few beside the family have seen her lately She is spoken of among her female friends as very lively very modest fond of reading and of music added to which advantages she is heiress to her uncle the Bishop of Carpentras, now invested with the purple For her fortune and for the care bestowed on her education she is indebted to her sister who having deceived many respectable young men with hopes of marriage was herself at last deceived in them and bore about her an indication that deceived no one During the three years that her father lived after this too domestic calamity, he confined her in a country-house, leaving her only the liberty of a garden fenced with high

[8 From Beside to theirs (5 lines) added in 2nd ed.]

walls He died at Paris and the mother who fondly loved Egidia went instantly and liberated her permitting her to return to Avignon while she herself hid her grief it is said, with young Gaspard de l'Œuf in the villa Egidia was resolved to enjoy the first moments of freedom and perhaps to show how little she cared for an unforgiving father No one however at Avignon beyond the family had yet heard any thing of his decease The evening of her liberation she walked along the banks of the Durance with her favourite spaniel which had become fat and unwieldy by its confinement and by lying all day under the southern wall of the garden and having never been combed nor washed exhibited every sign of dirtiness and decrepitude To render him smarter she adorned him again with his rich silver collar now fitting him no longer and hardly by any effort to be clasped about his voluminous neck He escaped from her dragging after him the scarlet ribbon which she had formed into a chain that it might appear the richer with its festoons about it and that she might hold the last object of her love the faster On the banks of the river he struggled with both paws to disengage the collar and unhappily one of them passed through a link of the ribbon Frightened and half blind he ran on his three legs he knew not whither and tumbled through some low willows into the Durance Egidia caught at the end of the ribbon and, the bank giving way she fell with him into deep water She had the moment before, looked in vain for assistance to catch her spaniel for her, and had cast a reproachful glance toward the bridge about a hundred paces off, on which Tenerin de Gisors was leaning with his arms folded upon the battlement

"Now said he to himself one woman at least would die for me She implored my pity before she committed the rash act,—as such acts are called on other occasions

Without stirring a foot or unfolding an arm, he added pathetically from Ovid —

> Sic ubi fata vocant udis abjectus in herbis
> Ad vada Mæandri concinit albus olor

We will not inquire whether the verses are the more misplaced by the poet, or were the more misapplied by the reciter Tenerin now stepped forward, both to preserve his conquest

and add solemnity to his triumph He lost however the opportunity of saving his mistress, and saw her carried to the other side of the river by two stout peasants who had been purchasing some barrels in readiness for the vintage and who placed her with her face downward that the water might run out of her mouth He gave them a *livre* on condition that they should declare he alone had saved the lady he then quietly walked up to his neck in the stream turned back again and assisted (or rather followed) the youths in conveying her to the monastery near the city gate

Here he learned after many vain inquiries that the lady was no other than the daughter of Philibert de la Haye Perpetually had he heard in every conversation the praises of Cyrilla of her beauty her temper her reserve, her accomplishments, and what a lucky thing for her was the false step of her sister immured for life and leaving her in sole expectation of a vast inheritance Hastening homeward he dressed himself in more gallant trim and went forthwith to the Bishop of Carpentras then at Avignon to whom he did not find admittance as his lordship had only that morning received intelligence of his brother-in law s decease He expressed by letter his gratitude to Divine Providence for having enabled him to rescue the loveliest of her sex from the horrors of a watery grave announced his rank, his fortune (not indeed to be mentioned or thought of in comparison with her merits) and entreated the honor of a union with her if his lordship could sympathize with him in feeling that such purity ought never to have been enfolded (might he say it?) in the arms of any man who was not destined to be her husband

'Ah!' said the bishop when he had perused the letter 'the young man too well knows what has happened who does not The Holy Father himself hath shed paternal tears upon it Providential this falling into the water this endangering of a sinful life! May it awaken her remorse and repentance as it hath awakened his pity and compassion! His proceeding is liberal and delicate he could not speak more passionately and more guardedly He was (now I find) one of her early admirers No reference to others no reproaches True love wears well I do not like this matter to grow too public I will set out for Carpentras in another hour, first writing a few

lines directing M Tenerin to meet me at the palace this evening as soon as may be convenient We must forgive the fault of Egidia now she has found a good match, and we may put on mourning for the father my worthy brother in law, next week

Such were the cogitations and plans of the bishop, and he carried them at once into execution for, knowing what the frailty of human nature is as if he knew it from inspiration he had by no means unshaken faith in the waters of the Durance as restorative or conservative of chastity

Tenerin has been since observed to whistle oftener than to sing and when he begins to warble any of his amatory lays which seldom happens the words do not please him as they used to do and he breaks off abruptly A friend of his said to him in my presence Your ear, Tenerin has grown fastidious since you walked up to it in the water on the first of August

Boccaccio Francesco! the more I reflect on the story you have related to us the more plainly do I perceive how natural it is and this too in the very peculiarity that appeared to me at first as being the contrary Unless we make a selection of subjects unless we observe their heights and distances unless we give them their angles and shades we may as well paint with white-wash We do not want strange events so much as those by which we are admitted into the recesses or carried on amid the operations of the human mind We are stimulated by its activity, but we are greatly more pleased at surveying it leisurely in its quiescent state, uncovered and unsuspicious Few however are capable of describing or even of remarking it while strange and unexpected contingencies are the commonest pedlery of the markets and the joint patrimony of the tapsters

I have drawn so largely from my brain for the production of a hundred stories many of which I confess are witless and worthless, and many just as Ser Geoffreddo saw them incomplete, that if my memory did not come to my assistance I should be mistrustful of my imagination

Chaucer Ungrateful man! the world never found one like it.[9]

Boccaccio Are Englishmen so Asiatic in the profusion of compliments?

[9 First ed reads "it and could not promise nor hold another such *Boccaccio* &c]

I know not Francesco whether you may deem this cathedral a befitting place for narratives of love

Petrarca No place is more befitting since if the love be holy no sentiment is essentially so divine and if unholy we may pray the more devoutly and effectually in such an audience for the souls of those who harbored it Beside which the coolness of the aisles and their silence, and their solitariness at the extremity of the city would check within us any motive or tendency to lasciviousness and lightness if the subject should lie that way and if your spirits should incautiously follow it my friend Giovanni as (pardon my sincerity!) they are somewhat too propense

Boccaccio My scruples are satisfied and removed

The air of Naples is not so inclement as that of our Arezzo and there are some who will tell us if we listen to them that few places in the world are more favorable and conducive to amorous inclinations I often heard it while I resided there and the pulpit gave an echo to the public voice Strange then it may appear to you that jealousy should find a place in the connubial state and after a year or more of marriage nevertheless so it happened

The Prince of Policastro was united to a lady of his own rank and yet he could not be quite so happy as he should have been with her She brought him a magnificent dowry and I never saw valets more covered with lace fringes knots and every thing else that ought to content the lordly heart than I have seen behind the chairs of the Prince and Princess of Policastro Alas! what are all the blessings of this sublunary world to the lord whose lady has thin lips! The princess was very loving as much after the first year as the prince was after the first night Even this would not content him

Time Ser Geoffreddo remembering that Love and he in some other planet flew together and neither left the other behind, is angry to be outstripped by him and challenges him to a trial of speed every day The tiresome dotard is always distanced yet always calls hoarsely after him as if he had ever seen Love turn back again, any more than Love had seen him Well, let them settle the matter between themselves

Would you believe it?—the princess could not make her

husband in the least the fonder of her by all her assiduities, not even by watching him while he was awake more assiduously than the tenderest mother ever watched her sleeping infant Although to vary her fascinations and enchantments she called him wretch and villain he was afterward as wretched and villainous as if she never had taken half the pains about him

She had brought in her train a certain Jacometta, whom she persuaded to espy his motions He was soon aware of it and calling her to him said —

Discreet and fair Jacometta the princess, you know very well thinks me inattentive to her and being unable to fix on any other object of suspicion she marks out you and boasts among her friends that she has persuaded a foolish girl to follow and watch me that she may at last by the temptation she throws into our way, rid herself of a beauty who in future might give her great uneasiness Certainly, if my heart could wander its wanderings would be near home I do not exactly say I should prefer you to every woman on earth for reason and gratitude must guide my passion, and, unless where I might expect to find attachment I shall ever remain indifferent to personal charms You may relate to your mistress whatever you think proper of this conversation If you believe a person of your own sex can be more attached and faithful to you than the most circumspect of ours then repeat the whole If on the contrary you imagine that I can be hereafter of any use to you, and that it is my interest to keep secret any confidence with which you may honor me, the princess has now enabled us to avoid being circumvented by her It cannot hurt me you are young, unsettled incautious and unsuspicious

Jacometta held down her head in confusion the prince taking her by the hand requested her not to think he was offended He persuaded her to let him meet her privately, that he might give her warning if any thing should occur and that he might assist her to turn aside the machinations of their enemy The first time they met, nothing had occurred he pressed her hand, slipped a valuable ring on one of the fingers and passed The second time nothing material, nothing but what might be warded off let the worst happen, the friend who gave him information of the designs laid against her would receive her The princess

saw with wonder and admiration the earnestness with which Jacometta watched for her The faithless man could hardly move hand or foot without a motion on the part of her attendant She had observed him near the chamber door of Jacometta and laughed in her heart at the beguiled deceiver 'Do you know, Jacometta I myself saw him within two paces of your bedroom!

'I am quite confident it was he madam!' answered Jacometta 'and I do believe in my conscience he come every night What[10] he wants I cannot imagine He seems to stop before the tube roses and carnations on the balustrade whether to smell at them a little or to catch the fresh breezes from Sorrento I fancied at first he might be restless and unhappy (pardon me madonna!) at your differences

'No no said the princess, with a smile, I understand what he wants never mind make no inquiries he is little aware how we are planning to catch him He has seen you look after him he fancies that you care about him that you really like him absolutely love him —I could almost laugh —that you would (foolish man! foolish man! genuine Policastro!) listen to him Do you understand?'

Jacometta's two ears reddened into transparency and clapping a hand on each she cried, after a long sigh Lord! can he think of me? is he mad? does he take a poor girl for a princess? Generally I sleep soundly but once or twice he has awakened me, perhaps not well knowing the passage But if, indeed he is so very wicked as to design to ruin me and what is worse to deceive the best of ladies might it not be advisable to fasten in the centre and in the sides of the corridor five, or six or seven sharp swords, with their points toward whoever—

"Jacometta! do nothing violently nothing rashly nothing without me

There was only one thing that Jacometta wished to do without the princess and certainly she was disposed to do nothing violently or rashly, for she was now completely in the interest (these holy walls forbid me to speak more explicitly) of Policastro

"We will be a match for him' said the princess "You must leave your room door open to night'

[10 From What to princess (15 lines) added in 2nd ed]

Jacometta fell on her knees and declared she was honest though poor — an exclamation which I daresay Messer Geoffreddo, you have often heard in Italy it being the preface to every act of roguery and lubricity unless from a knight or knight's lady The Princess of Policastro was ignorant of this, and so was Jacometta when she used it. The mistress insisted the attendant deprecated

"Simple child! no earthly mischief shall befall you To night you shall sleep in my bed and I in yours awaiting the false wretch misled my husband

Satisfied with the ingenuity of her device, the princess was excessively courteous to the prince at dinner and indeed through out the whole day He on his part was in transports he said at her affability and sweet amiable temper Poor Jacometta really knew not what to do scarcely for one moment could she speak to the prince that he might be on his guard

Do it! do it! said he pressing her hand as she passed him "We must submit

At the proper time he went in his slippers to the bedroom of the princess and entered the spacious bed which like the domains of the rich is never quite spacious enough for them Jacometta was persuaded to utter no exclamation in the beginning and was allowed to employ whatever vehemence she pleased at a fitter moment The princess tossed about in Jacometta's bed, inveighing most furiously against her faithless husband; her passionate voice was hardly in any degree suppressed Jacometta too tossed about in the princess's bed, and her voice labored under little less suppression At last the principal cause of vexation with the jealous wife was the unreasonable time to which her husband protracted the commission of his infidelity After two hours or thereabout, she began to question whether he really had ever been unfaithful at all, began to be of the opinion that there are malicious people in the world and returned to her own chamber She fancied she heard voices within, and listening attentively, distinguished these outcries —

'No resistance madam! An injured husband claims imperatively his promised bliss, denied him not through antipathy, not through hatred, not through any demerits on his part, but through unjust and barbarous jealousy Resist! bite! beat me! Villain!

— ravisher —am I? am I? Excruciated as I am wronged robbed of my happiness of my sacred conjugal rights may the Blessed Virgin never countenance me never look on me or listen to me if this is not the last time I ask them or if ever I accept them though offered

At which he rushed indignantly from the bed threw open the door and pushing aside the princess cried raving, Vile treacherous girl! standing there peeping! half naked! At your infantine age dare you thus intrude upon the holy mysteries of the marriage bed?

Screaming out these words he ran like one possessed by the devil into his own room bolted the door with vehemence locked it, cursed it slipped between the sheets and slept soundly

The princess was astonished she asked herself, Why did not I do this? why did not I do that? The reason was she had learned her own part but not his Scarcely had she entered her chamber when Jacometta fell upon her neck sobbing aloud and declaring that nothing but her providential presence could have saved her She had muffled herself up she said folding the bed clothes about her double and triple and was several times on the point of calling up the whole household in her extremity strict as was her mistress's charge upon her to be silent The princess threw a shower of odoriferous waters over her and took every care to restore her spirits and to preserve her from a hysterical fit after such exertion and exhaustion When she was rather more recovered she dropped on her knees before her lady and entreated and implored that, on the renewal of her love in its pristine ardor for the prince she never would tell him in any moment of tender confidence that it was she who was in the bed

The princess was slow to give the promise for she was very conscientious At last however she gave it saying The prince my husband has taken a most awful oath never to renew the moments you apprehend Our Lady strengthen me to bear my heavy affliction! Her divine grace has cured my agonized breast of its inveterate jealousy

She paused for some time then drying her tears, for she had shed several, she invited Jacometta to sit upon the bedside with her Jacometta did so and the princess, taking her hand,

continued I hardly know what is passing in my mind Jacometta! I found it difficult to bear an injury though an empty and unreal one let me try whether the efforts I make will enable me to endure a misfortune —on the faith of a woman, my dear Jacometta no unreal nor empty one Policastro is young it would be unreasonable in me to desire he should lead the life of an anchorite, and perhaps not quite reasonable in him to expect the miracle of my blood congealing

After this narration Messer Francesco walked toward the high altar and made his genuflexion the same did Messer Giovanni and in the act of it, slapped Ser Geoffreddo on the shoulder telling him he might dispense with the ceremony by reason of his inflexible boots and the buck skin paling about his loins Ser Geoffreddo did it nevertheless and with equal devotion His two friends then took him between them to the house of Messer Francesco where dinner had been some time waiting

XV BARROW AND NEWTON[1]

Newton I come sir before you with fear and trembling, at the thoughts of my examination to morrow If the masters are too hard upon me, I shall never take my degree How I passed

[1 Landor must suppose this Conversation to have taken place in 1668 the day before Newton went up for his master's degree He was then twenty seven years of age and had completed the more important part of his studies Barrow was then Lucasian professor of Geometry He had used Newton's skill in the revision of his Lectiones Opticæ and had acknowledged the benefit his book had received from Newton's corrections and additions In the following year Barrow resigned his professorship to Newton and for the rest of his life devoted himself almost entirely to theology In the *Critical Review* June 8 1808 there is an article of Dr Parr's in which occurs (p 18) an eulogy on Barrow Within the grasp of his mighty and capacious mind were comprehended the broad generalities which are discussed in science and the minuter discriminations which are to be learned only by familiarity with common life At one moment he soars aloft to the great without any exhaustion of his vigour and in the next without any diminution of his dignity he descended to the little— he drew his materials from the richest treasures of learning ancient and modern sacred and profane—he sets before us in solemn and magnificent array, the testimony of historians the criticisms of scholars, the arguments

as bachelor I cannot tell it must surely have been by especial indulgence

Barrow My dear Isaac! do not be dispirited The less intelligent of the examiners will break their beaks against the gravel in trying to cure the indigestions and heartburnings your plenteousness has given them the more intelligent know your industry, your abilities and your modesty they would favor you if there were need of favor, but you without compliment, surpass them all

Newton Oh sir! forbear forbear! I fear I may have forgotten a good deal of what you taught me

Barrow I wonder at that I am older than you by many years I have many occupations and distractions, my memory is by nature less retentive and yet I have not forgotten any thing *you* taught *me*

Newton Too partial tutor too benevolent friend! this unmerited praise confounds me I cannot calculate the powers of my mind otherwise than by calculating the time I require to compass any thing

Barrow Quickness is among the least of the mind's properties, and belongs to her in almost her lowest state nay it doth not abandon her when she is driven from her home when she is wandering and insane The mad often retain it the liar has it the cheat has it we find it on the race course and at the card table education does not give it and reflection takes away from it

Newton I am slow, and there are many parts of ordinary learning yet unattained by me

Barrow I had an uncle a sportsman who said that the light dog beats over most ground, but the heavier finds the covey

Newton Oftentimes indeed have I submitted to you problems and possibilities—

Barrow And I have made you prove them

Newton You were contented with me, all may not be

Barrow All will not be many would be more so if you could prove nothing Men like dogs and cats, fawn upon you

of metaphysicians the description of poets the profound remarks of heathen sages and the pious reflections of Christian fathers (Imag Convers v 18 9 Works i 1846 Works iv 1876)]

while you leave them on the ground if you lift them up they bite and scratch and if you show them their own features in the glass, they would fly at your throat and tear your eyes out This between ourselves for we must not indulge in unfavourable views of mankind since by doing it we make bad men believe that they are no worse than others and we teach the good that they are good in vain Philosophers have taken this side of the question to show their ingenuity but sound philosophers are not ingenious If philosophy can render us no better and no happier away with it! There are things that can and let us take them

What dost thou sigh at Isaac?

Newton At my ignorance in some degree of their writings

Barrow At your ignorance of the ignorant? No man ever understood the things that are most admired in Plato and Aristotles In Plato there are incoherencies that fall to pieces at a touch, and Aristotles lost himself in the involutions of his own web What must we think of a philosopher who promised to teach one pupil that which he withheld from the rest although these were more familiar with him and more instructed? And what must we think of a pupil, who was indignant that any others should partake in his sentiments and his knowledge? Yet such men have guided the scientific such men have ruled the world

Newton Not such was Bacon

Barrow No, indeed I told you and I repeat it, I think the small volume of *Essays* in your hand contains more wisdom and more genius than we can find in all the philosophers of antiquity, with one exception Cicero On which I desired you to peruse it attentively and to render me an account of it according to your opinion

Newton Sir, I have been induced to believe but rather from the authority of my elders than from my own investigation, that Bacon is the more profound of the two although not the more eloquent

Barrow If Bacon had written as easily and harmoniously as Cicero, he would have lost a portion of his weight with the generality of the learned who are apt to conceive that in easy movement there is a want of solidity and strength We must

[2 First ed reads strength Take away all Cicero's wit and half his eloquence and you have a Bacon at bottom Very wise &c]

confess that antiquity has darkened colleges and has distorted criticism Very wise men and very witty and inquisitive walk over the earth and are ignorant not only what minerals lie beneath but what herbs and foliage they are treading Some time afterward and probably some distant time a specimen of ore is extricted and exhibited then another Lastly the bearing and diameter of the vein are observed and measured Thus it is with writers who are to have a currency through ages In the beginning they are confounded with most others soon they fall into some secondary class next into one rather less obscure and humble by degrees they are liberated from the dross and lumber that hamper them and being once above the heads of contemporaries rise slowly and waveringly then regularly and exactly then rapidly and majestically, till the vision storms and aches as it pursues them in their ethereal elevation

Neither you nor I have wasted our time in the cultivation of poetry but each of us hath frequently heard it discoursed on by those who have and if it serves for nothing else it serves for an illustration In my early days he would have been scoffed out of countenance who should have compared the *Lycidas* or the *Allegro* and *Penseroso* of Mr John Milton to the sterling poetry (as it was called) of Dr John Donne and yet much may be said in favor of the younger and there are those and not only undergraduates but bachelors and masters who venture even to prefer him openly Who knows but we may see him extolled to the level of Lucan and Statius strong as is the sense of the University against all sorts of supplanters! There are eyes that cannot see print when new them there are men that cannot see merit.

Newton The Latin secretary may be pardoned for many defects in his poetry and even for many in his politics in consideration of the reverence he bore toward the *Apocalypse* I cannot think him a very religious man although he does not attend divine service we are told so regularly as we could have wished

Barrow Let us talk no more about him I opposed his principles nevertheless he may have acted conscientiously and even his principles are now coming again into fashion, and among the sons of those very cavaliers who would have hanged him Perhaps the most dangerous of his doctrines, the lawfulness of

setting aside God's anointed for misconduct may soon be the leading one in the front of our Constitution Well! we are not met for politics only it would be salutary to consider, if God's anointed will not be set aside, what must be done —how avoid the commission of a diabolical act

Newton Could we rightly understand the *Revelation*, I question not but every difficulty of this nature would be solved

Barrow May be let us trust in God

Newton We must have certain *data* for every thing upon which we reason the greater part of reasoners begin without them

Barrow I wish the event may answer your expectations that the *Apocalypse* the *Argonautic Expedition* and the *Siege of Troy* form the trident which is to push away our difficulties in navigating through all the rocks and shoals of time,—all those of religion, and all those of history Happen what may I doubt nothing of your surpassing the foremost of your competitors —of your very soon obtaining a name in the University little below Doctor Spry's of Caius Doctor Brockhouse's of St John's Doctor Cockburn's of Emanuel, Doctor Turnbull's of Peter house, or Doctor Cruikshank's of Bennet may a name which, within a few years may reach even to Leyden and Paris as that of a most studious young man, distinguished alike for application and invention

Newton Although I could not in conscience disclaim the small merit there may be in application, since I owe it to the encouragement of my tutor, I surely have no right or title to invention

Barrow You have already given proofs of it beyond any man I know Your questions lead to great discoveries whether it please God that you hereafter make them, or some one following you is yet uncertain We are silly enough to believe that the quality of invention, as applied to literature, lies in poetry and romance, mostly or altogether I dare to speculate on discoveries in the subjects of your studies, every one far greater, every one far more wonderful than all that lie within the range of fiction In our days, the historian is the only inventor, and it is ludicrous to see how busily and lustily he beats about, with his string and muzzle upon him I wish we could drag him for a moment

into philosophical life it would be still more amusing to look at him, as he runs over this loftier and dryer ground throwing up his nose and whimpering at the prickles he must pass through

Few men are contented with what is strictly true concerning the occurrences of the world it neither heats nor soothes The body itself when it is in perfect health is averse to a state of rest We wish our prejudices to be supported our animosities to be increased as those who are inflamed by liquor would add materials to the inflammation

Newton The simple verities important perhaps in their consequences which I am exploring not only abstract me from the daily business of society, but exempt me from the hatred and persecution to which every other kind of study is exposed In poetry a good pastoral would raise against one as vehement enemies as a good satire A great poet in our country like the great giant in Sicily can never move without shaking the whole island while the mathematician and astronomer may pursue their occupations and rarely be hissed or pelted from below You spoke of historians it would ill become a person of my small experience to discourse on them after you

Barrow Let me hear however what you have to say since at least it will be dispassionate

Newton Those who now write history do certainly write it to gratify a party and to obtain notoriety and money The materials lie in the cabinet of the statesman whose actions and their consequences are to be recorded If you censure them you are called ungrateful for the facilities he has afforded you and, if you commend them venal No man both judicious and honest will subject himself to either imputation

Barrow Not only at the present day but always the indulgence of animosity, the love of gain and the desire of favor have been the inducements of an author to publish in his lifetime the history of his contemporaries But there have been, and let us hope there may be judicious and virtuous men, so inflamed by the glory of their country in their days that leaving all passions and prejudices they follow this sole guide, and are crowned by universal consent for commemorating her recent exploits

Newton Here are reasons enough for me rather to apply my mind as you direct it, than to the examination of facts which never

can be collected by one person or to poetry for which I have no call or to the composition of essays such as those of Montaigne and Bacon, or dialogues such as those of Cicero and Plato, and nearer our times of Erasmus and Galileo You had furnished me before with arguments in abundance convincing me that even if I could write as well as they did, the reward of my labors would be dilatory and posthumous

Barrow I should entertain a mean opinion of myself if all men or the most part praised and admired me it would prove me to be somewhat like them Sad and sorrowful is it to stand near enough to people for them to see us wholly for them to come up to us and walk round us leisurely and idly and pat us when they are tired and going off That lesson which a dunce can learn at a glance and likes mightily must contain little, and not good Unless it can be proved that the majority are not dunces —are not wilful presumptuous and precipitate,—it is a folly to care for popularity There are indeed those who must found their fortunes upon it but not with books in their hands After the first start after a stand among the booths and gauds and prostitutes of party how few have lived contentedly or died calmly! One hath fallen the moment when he had reached the last step of the ladder having undermined it for him who went before and forgotten that knavish act another hath wasted away more slowly in the fever of a life externally sedentary internally distracted a third unable to fulfil the treason he had stipulated, and haunted by the terrors of detection, snips the thread under the shears of the Fates and makes even those who frequented him believe in Providence

Isaac! Isaac! the climbing plants are slender ones Men of genius have sometimes been forced away from the service of society into the service of princes but they have soon been driven out, or have retired When shall we see again in the administration of any country, so accomplished a creature as Wentworth,* the favorite of Charles? Only light men recover false steps his greatness crushed him Aptitude for serving princes is no proof

He far excelled in energy and capacity the other councillors of Charles but there was scarcely a crueller or (with the exception of his master) a more perfidious man on either side Added to which he was wantonly oppressive and sordidly avaricious

or signification of genius, nor indeed of any elevated or extensive knowledge The interests of many require a multiplicity of talents to comprehend and accomplish them Mazarin and Richelieu were as little able as they were little disposed to promote the well being of the community both of them had keen eyes, and kept them on one object,[3]—aggrandizement. We find the most trivial men in the streets pursuing an object through as many intricacies and attaining it and the schemes of children though sooner dropped are frequently as ingenious and judicious No person can see more clearly than you do the mortifications to which the ambitious are subject but some may fall into the snares of ambition whose nature was ever averse to it and whose wisdom would almost reach any thing and only seems too lofty to serve them watchfully as a guard It may thus happen to such as have been accustomed to study and retirement, and fall unexpectedly on the political world by means of recommendations There are those I doubt not who would gladly raise their name and authority in the State by pushing you forward, as the phrase is, into Parliament They seize any young man who has gained some credit at college, no matter for what whether for writing an epigram or construing a passage in Lycophron and if he succeeds to power, they and their family divide the patronage The ambitious heart is liable to burst in the emptiness of its elevation let yours, which is under the lower and quieter Think how much greater is the glory you may acquire by opening new paths to science, than by widening old ones to corruption I would not whisper a syllable in the ear of faction, but the words of the intelligent in certain times and on certain occasions do not vary with parties and systems The loyalist and republican meet the difference lies merely in the intent, the direction, and the application Do not leave the wise for the unwise the lofty for the low the retirement of a college for the turbulence of a House of Commons Rise but let no man lift you leave that to the little and to the weak Think within yourself I will not say how impure are the sources of election to our Parliament, but how inconsiderable a distinction is conferred on the representative, even where it is not an individual who nominates, or only a few who appoint him but where several

[3 First ed reads the aggrandizement of their master We &c.]

hundreds are the voters For who are they, and who direct them?—the roughest bear guard the most ferocious bull baiter, the most impudent lawyer the tinker that sings loudest, and the parson that sits latest at the ale house hitting them all by turns with his tobacco pipe, calling them all sad dogs and swearing till he falls asleep he will hear no more filthy toasts Show me the borough where such people as these are not the most efficient in returning a candidate to Parliament and then tell me which of them is fit to be the associate—it would be too ludicrous to say the patron—of a Euclid or an Archimedes? My dear Newton! the best thing is to stand above the world, the next is to stand apart from it on any side You *may* attain the first, in trying to attain it, you are certain of the second

Newton I am not likely to be noticed by the great nor favored by the popular I have no time for visiting I detest the strife of tongues all noises discompose me

Barrow We will then lay aside the supposition The haven of philosophy itself is not free at all seasons from its gusts and swells Let me admonish you to confide your secrets to few I mean the secrets of science In every great mind there are some every deep inquirer hath discovered more than he thought it prudent to avow as almost every shallow one throws out more than he hath well discovered Among our learned friends we may be fully and unreservedly philosophical in the company of others we must remember, first and chiefly, that discretion is a part of philosophy, and we must let out only some glimpses of the remainder

Newton Surely no harm can befall us from following a chain of demonstrations in geometry or any branch of the mathematics

Barrow Let us hope there may be none, nevertheless we cannot but recollect how lately Galileo was persecuted and imprisoned for his discoveries

Newton. He lived under a popish government.

Barrow My friend! my friend! all the most eminently scientific, all the most eminently brave and daring in the exercise of their intellects, live, and have ever lived, under a popish government There are popes in all creeds, in all countries, in all ages Political power is jealous of intellectual,

often lest it expose and mar its plans and projects and oftener lest it attract an equal share of celebrity and distinction When ever the literary man is protected by the political the incitement to it is the pride of patronage not the advancement of letters, nor the honor they confer on the cultivator or the country

Newton That is rational in England which beyond the Alps is monstrous By God's blessing I firmly believe in the *Holy Scriptures* yet, under your discretion and guidance I would be informed if[1] the sun's rays in Syria could ever be above the horizon for twenty four hours without a material alteration without an utter derangement, of our whole mundane system *

Barrow Reserve that question for a future time and a wiser teacher At present I would only remark to you that our mundane system *has* been materially altered and that its alterations may have been attributed to other causes than the true and laid down by different nations as having taken place at different epochs and on different occasions sometimes to gratify their pride sometimes to conceal their ignorance

Newton I am not quite satisfied

Barrow Those who are quite satisfied sit still and do nothing those who are not quite satisfied are the sole benefactors of the world

[[1] First ed reads if the sun could stand still at one time than at another and if his ray &c The footnote refers to the case of Thomas Aikenhead who was executed in Scotland in the year 1696 for denying the Trinity See Macaulay Hist Eng chapter xxii for the whole disgraceful story Le Clerc received from Locke a letter written by Newton on two texts in the Greek Testament the first of which 1 John v vii is the celebrated text about the three witnesses Like every other scholar of repute Newton denied its authenticity Le Clerc was to have published a French translation of the letter but Newton hearing of it wrote to Locke to stop the publication Le Clerc at the time did not know that Newton was the author and it was not till some time after that he discovered this and brought out a version of the letter in a slightly altered form]

* Newton was timid and reserved in expressing his opinion and was more orthodox (in the Anglican sense of orthodoxy) early in life than later What he thought at last is not clear and perhaps it was well for him that it was no clearer Under his eye in the reign of William III a youth of eighteen was punished with death for expressing such opinions as our philosopher hinted to Le Clerc To remove and consume the gallows on which such men are liable to suffer is among the principal aims and intents of these writings

Newton And are driven out of it for their pains

Barrow Men seldom have loved their teachers

Newton How happens it then that you are loved so generally for who is there capable of instruction that you have not taught? Never since I have been at the University have I heard of any one being your enemy who was not a Calvinist —a sect wherein good humored nd gracefully minded men are scanty

Barrow Do not attribute the failing to the sect, which hath many strong texts of Scripture for its support but rather think that the doctrines are such as are most consentaneous to the malignant and morose There are acrid plants that attract as many insects as the sweeter but insects of another kind All substances have their commodities all opinions their partisans I have been happy in my pupils but in none of them have I observed such a spirit of investigation as in you Keep it however, within the precincts of experimental and sure philosophy, which are spacious enough for the excursions of the most vigorous mind, and varied enough for the most inconstant and flighty Never hate never dislike men for difference of religion Some receive baleful impressions in it more easily than others, as they do diseases We do not hate a child for catching the small pox but pity its sores and blemishes Let the Calvinist hate us he represents his God as a hater, he represents him as capricious I wish he would love us even from caprice but he seem to consider this part of the Divine nature as a weakness

Come, unroll your paper, let me hear what you have to say on Bacon s *Essays*,—a volume I place in the hand of those only who appear to me destined to be great

Newton He says in his Preface,—

'I do now publish my *Essays*, which of all my *other*[5] works have been most current'

How can the very things of which you are speaking be *another?*

Barrow This is a chasm in logic, into which many have fallen

Newton I had scarcely begun the first Essay, when an elderly gentleman of another college came into the room, took up the book and read aloud,—

"This same truth is a naked and open daylight that doth not

[5 Bacon wrote of all my works]

show the masks and mummeries and triumphs of the world half so stately and dauntily as candle lights Truth may perhaps come to the price of a pearl, that showeth best by day but it will not rise to the price of a diamond or carbuncle that showeth best in varied lights A mixture of a lie doth ever add pleasure Doth any man doubt that if there were taken out of men's minds vain opinions flatterings, hopes, false valuations imaginations as one would and the like but it would leave the minds of a number of men poor shrunken things full of melancholy and indisposition, *and unpleasing to themselves*?

One might well imagine said he 'unpleasing to themselves *if* full of melancholy and indisposition But how much of truth and wisdom is compressed in these few sentences! Do not you wonder that a man capable of all this should likewise be capable of such foolery as the following —

"I last he breathed light upon the face of the matter or chaos then he breathed light into the face of man and still he *breatheth and inspireth* light into the face of his chosen

I looked with wonder at him, knowing his seriousness and gravity his habits and powers of ratiocination, and his blameless life But perhaps I owe to his question the intensity and sedulity with which I have examined every page of Bacon He called the words I have quoted dull and colourless bombast he declared them idle in allusion and false and impious I was appalled He added 'I do not know Mr Newton whether you have brothers if you have what would you think of your father when he gave a cherry to one a whipping to a second and burned the fingers of a third against the bars of his kitchen grate and vouchsafed no better reason for it than that he had resolved to do so the very night he begot them? Election in such a case is partiality, partiality is injustice Is God unjust?

I could have answered him by God's help if he had given me time, but he went on, and said Bacon had much sagacity but no sincerity much force, but no firmness It is painful to discover in him the reviler of Raleigh, the last relic of heroism in the distrustful court of James It is horrible to hear him, upon another occasion, the apologist of a patron's disgrace and death — the patron, whose friendly hand had raised him to the first steps of the highest station'

"Sir answered I "his political conduct is not the question before us

"It may, however,' said he, 'enlighten us in regard to his candour and induce us to ask ourselves whether, in matters of religion he delivered his thoughts exactly and whether he may not have conformed his expression of them to the opinions of his master

Barrow I hope you dropped the discussion after this

Newton No I cried resolutely Sir, when I am better prepared for it I may have something to say with you on your irreverent expressions

Barrow Mr Newton do not be ruffled Bacon spoke figuratively so did Moses to whom the illusion was made Let the matter rest my dear friend

Newton I told him plainly he was unfair he was no friend to Bacon He smiled at me and continued 'My good Newton, I am as ready to be told when I am unfair as you are to have your watch set right when it goes amiss You say I am no friend to Bacon and in truth, after the experience he left us in the Earl of Essex he is not precisely the man to place one's friendship on Yet surely no folly is greater than hatred of those we never saw, and from whom we can have received no injury Often do I wonder when I hear violent declamations against theories and opinions which declamations I think are as ill-directed as they would be against currents of air or watercourses We may keep out of their way if we will I estimate the genius of Bacon as highly as perhaps you do, and in this Essay I find a single sentence which I would rather have written than all the volumes of all the Greek philosophers, let me read it 'Certainly it is heaven upon earth to have a man's mind move in charity, rest in Providence, and turn upon the poles of truth

Barrow Magnificent as Shakspeare!

Newton He who wrote tragedies?

Barrow The same I have lately been reading them

Newton Sir, should you have marked the truths he demonstrated if any, I shall think it no loss of time to run over them, at my leisure I have now a question to ask you on the third of these Essays We find in it that "Quarrels and divisions about religion were evils unknown to the heathen the reason was,

because the religion of the heathen consisted rather in rites and ceremonies than in constant belief This is no truer of the old Paganism than of the later in the same country which however burns men alive for light divergencies

'You may imagine says Bacon what kind of faith theirs was when the chief doctors and fathers of their church were the poets

I read this loudly and triumphantly to my friend, who paused and smiled and then asked me complacently whether it were better to imprison burn and torture or to send away the audience in good humor and good fellowship and whether I should prefer the conversation and conviction of Doctor Bonner and Doctor Gardiner to those of Doctor Tibullus and Doctor Ovid I thought the question too flippant for an answer which indeed was not quite at hand He proceeded God has this attribute that he is a jealous God, and therefore his worship and religion will endure no mixture His jealousy must be touched to the quick said my friend for every century there comes forth some new pretender with his sect behind him in the dark passages and his spouse was hardly at her own door after the nuptials ere she cried out and shrieked against the filthiness of an intruder

I was lifting up my eyes and preparing an ejaculation when he interrupted me, and continued "It is certain that heresies and schisms are *of all others* the greatest scandals yea more than corruption of manners for, as in the natural body a wound or solution of continuity is worse than a corrupt humor —

Here he laid down the volume and said I will ask the professor of surgery whether a cut in the finger is worse than a scrofula I will then go to the professor of divinity and ask him whether the best Christian in Cambridge ought to be hanged to morrow morning

I stared at him whereupon he declared that every church on earth is heretical and schismatical if the word of Christ is the foundation of the true and that the fellow who was hanged last week for *corruption of manners* had, according to the decision of Bacon, more Christianity in him than all the heads of colleges "When he would follow theologians, said my friend, he falls into gross absurdities he corrects himself, or only trips harmlessly when he walks alone

I myself was obliged to agree with my disputant in censuring an exception Speaking of *sanguinary persecutions to force consciences* the author blames them "except it be in cases of *overt scandal, blasphemy* &c Now who shall decide what is *overt scandal* or what is *blasphemy*? That which is prodigiously so in one age and one country is not at all in another Such exceptions are the most pernicious things a great author can sanction

Barrow I side with you We come now I perceive to the Essay *On Revenge*

Newton "There is no man doth a wrong for the wrong's sake but thereby to purchase himself profit, or pleasure, or honor, *or the like* therefore why should I be angry with a man for loving himself better than me?

If this be an excuse why send a rogue to prison? All the crimes that men commit are committed because they love themselves better than others, and it is the direction and extent of this loving, to the detriment of others, that constitutes the magnitude of the crime Cruelty is the highest pleasure to the cruel man it is his love Murder may ensue and shall we not be *angry with him* for loving himself better than the murdered?

On Simulation and Dissimulation, we are told, "The best composition and temperature [a] is to have a power to feign if there be no remedy

Barrow In other words to lie whenever we find it convenient. The last two decisions you have reported from him as little become the chancellor as the philosopher as little the philosopher as the citizen Why will you not read on?

Newton I am afraid to mention the remark of my visitor on a sentence in the Essay *Upon Goodness*

Barrow Fear not what is it?

Newton 'The desire of knowledge in excess caused man to fall

Barrow This is a sin the most rarely of all committed in our days If the earth is to be destroyed by fire, the bottom of a rushchair will serve to consume all who are guilty of it and what falls from heaven may fall upon other offenders

[a Bacon wrote temperature is to have openness in fame and opinion secrecy in habit, dissimulation in seasonable use and a power, &c]

Newton "Do you believe said my friend that God punished men for wishing to be wiser? for wishing to follow him and to learn his pleasure? for wishing that acquisition by which beneficence and charity may be the most luminously and extensively displayed? No Newton no! The Jews who invented this story were envious of the scientific for they were ignorant of the sciences Astronomy among the rest was odious to them and hence the fables stuck against the Tower of Babel the observatory of a better and a wiser people their enemy their conqueror Take care or you may be hanged for shooting at the stars If these fictions are believed and acted on, you must conceal your telescope and burn your observations

On my representing to him the effects of divine justice in casting down to earth the monument of human pride he said The Observatory of Babylon was constructed of unbaked bricks and upon an alluvial soil Look at the Tower of Pisa look at every tower and steeple in that city you will find that they all lean and all in one direction that is toward the river Some have fallen many will fall God would not have been so angry with the Tower of Babel if it had been built of Portland stone a few weeks journey to the westward and you had been as importunate as the Babylonians were in their attempt at paying him a visit.

He expressed his wonder that Bacon in the reign of James should have written A king is the servant of his people *or else he were without a calling* In other words, whenever he ceases to be the *servant of the people*, he forfeits his right to the throne

Barrow Truth sometimes comes unaware upon caution and sometimes speaks in public as unconsciously as in a dream

Newton Sir although you desired me rather to investigate and note the imperfections of my author than what is excellent in him, as you would rather the opaquer parts of the sun than what is manifest of his glory to the lowest and most insensible, yet,

[7 Landor is here quoting from a spurious essay entitled Of a King (*See* Spedding's Bacon 1858 vol vi p 595) The passage reads To conclude as hee is of the greatest power so hee is subject to the greatest cares made the servant of his people or else he were without a calling at all]

from the study of your writings and from the traces of your hand in others I am sometimes led to notice the beauties of his style It requires the greatest strength to support such a weight of richness as we sometimes find in him The flood grows vapid where the room is not capacious and where perpetual freshness of thought does not animate and sustain it Unhappily it seems to have been taken up mostly by such writers as have least invention

Barrow Read to me the sentence or the paragraph that pleases you

Newton 'Tis *On Envy* —

'Lastly near kinsfolks and fellows in office, and those that have been bred together are more apt to envy their equals when they are raised for it doth uphraid unto them their own fortunes and pointeth at them and cometh oftener into their remembrance and incurreth likewise more into the note of others and envy ever redoubleth from speech and fame

Barrow Very excellent. I wish before he cast his invectives against Raleigh, he had reflected more on a doctrine in the next page Those that have joined with their honor great travels, cares or perils are less subject to envy for men think that they earn their honors hardly, and pity them sometimes and pity ever healeth envy I am afraid it will be found, on examination that Bacon in his morality was too like Seneca, not indeed wallowing in wealth and vice and crying out against them, but hard hearted and hypocritical and I know not with what countenance he could have said, 'By[8] indignities men come to dignities

Newton I have remarked with most satisfaction those sentences in which he appears to have forgotten both the age and station wherein he lived and to have equally overlooked the base and summit of our ruder institutions "Power to do good says he, as Euripides or Phocion might have said, and Pericles might have acted on it, "is the true and lawful end of aspiring, for good thoughts though God accept them yet towards men are little better than good dreams except they be put in act, and

[8 This quotation and the three following are from the essay Of Great Place In the third quotation the correct reading is of the ancient time]

that cannot be without power and place, as the vantage and commanding ground

And again 'Reduce things to the first institution and observe wherein and how they have degenerated' But yet ask counsel of both times *of the ancienter time what is best* and of the latter time what is fittest

Barrow He spoke unadvisedly for, true as these sentences are, they would lead toward republicanism if men minded them Of this however there is as little danger as that the servants of kings should follow the advice he gives afterward —

Embrace and invite helps and advices touching the execution of thy place and do not drive away such as bring thee information as meddlers, but accept of them in good part

Newton *On Seditions* he says the matter is of 'two kinds much poverty and much discontentment It appears to me that here is only one kind for much discontentment may spring, and usually does from much poverty

Barrow Certainly He should not have placed cause and effect as two causes You must however have remarked his wonderful sagacity in this brief Essay which I hesitate not to declare the finest piece of workmanship that ever was composed on any part of government Take Aristoteles and Machiavelli and compare the best sections of their works to this and then you will be able, in some degree, to calculate the superiority of genius in Bacon

Newton I have not analyzed the political works of Aristoteles but I find in Machiavelli many common thoughts among many ingenious many just [9] many questionable, and many false ones

Barrow What are you turning over? Do not let me lose any thing you have remarked

Newton "Money says my lord "is like muck, not good except it be spread I am afraid this truth would subvert in the mind of a reflecting man all that has been urged by the

[9 First ed reads just and more perverse ones Let the following serve for instances and I hasten the sooner to the exposition of them that I may raise no objection against any part of a treatise which you have commended so unexceptionally *Barrow* May be candid with me and bring forward your objection *Newton* Money &c]

learned author on the advantages of nobility and even of royalty, for which reason I dare not examine it only let me say doubt before you whether "this is to be done by suppressing or at the least keeping a straight hand upon the devouring trades of usury, engrossing great pasturages *and the like*

Barrow I wish he never had used, which he often does, those silly words *and the like*

Newton *Great pasturages* are not *trades* and they must operate in a way directly opposite to the one designated

Barrow I know not whether a manifest fault in reasoning be not sometimes more acceptable than stale and worm-eaten and weightless truths Heaps of these are to be found in almost every modern writer Bacon has fewer of them than any

Nicholas Machiavelli is usually mentioned as the deepest and acutest of the Italians a people whose grave manner often makes one imagine there is more to be found in them than they possess Take down that volume read the examples I have transcribed at the end —

"The loss of every devotion and every religion draws after it infinite inconveniences and infinite disorders

Inconveniences and disorders would follow sure enough the losses being negatives, *draw* nothing

"In a well constituted government war peace, and amity should be deliberated on not for the gratification of a few, but for the common good

That war is just which is necessary

'It is a cruel inhuman, and impious thing even in war, *stuprare le donne, violare le vergini* &c

"Fraud is detestable in every thing

These most obvious truths come forward as if he had now discovered them for the first time He tells us also that "A prince ought to take care that the people are not without food He says with equal gravity that, "Fraud is detestable in every thing," and that, A minister ought to be averse from public rapine, and should augment the public weal'

It would be an easy matter to fill many pages with flat and unprofitable sentences. I had only this blank one for it, and there are many yet, the places of which are marked with only the first words. Do not lose your time in looking for them we must not judge of him from these defects.

Newton Whenever I have heard him praised it was for vigor of thought

Barrow He is strongest where he is most perverse There are men who never show their muscles but when they have the cramp

Newton Consistency and firmness are not the characteristics of the Florentines nor ever were Machiavelli wished at one time to satisfy the man of probity at another to conciliate the rogue and robber at one time to stand on the alert for the return of liberty at another to sit in the portico of the palace and trim the new livery of nascent princes If we consider him as a writer, he was the acutest that had appeared since the revival of letters None had reasoned so profoundly on the political interests of society or had written so clearly or so boldly

Barrow Nevertheless the paper of a boy's cracker, when he has let it off, would be ill used by writing such stuff upon it as that which you have been reading The great merit of Machiavelli in style is the avoiding of superlatives We can with difficulty find an Italian prose writer who is not weak and inflated by the continual use of them, to give him pomp and energy as he imagines

Newton Davila too is an exception

Barrow The little elegance there is among the Italians is in their historians and poets the preachers the theologians the ethic writers the critics, are contemptible in the last degree Well, we will now leave the *Issimi* nation, and turn homeward

You will find that Bacon like all men conscious of their strength never strains or oversteps [10] While the Italians are the same in the church and in the market-place while the preacher and policinello are speaking in the same key and employing almost the same language while a man's God and his rotten tooth are treated in the same manner,—we find at home convenience and proportion Yet the French have taken more pains than we have done to give their language an edge and polish, and, although we have minds in England more massy

[10 First ed reads over-steps and is frugal in the use of superlatives while the Italian &c]

and more elevated than theirs they may claim a nearer affinity to the greater of the ancients

I have been the less unwilling to make this digression as we are now come nigh the place where we must be slow and circumspect. The subject awes and confounds me Human reason is a frail guide in our disquisitions on royalty, which requires in us some virtue like unto faith We cannot see into it clearly with the eyes of the flesh or of philosophy, but must humble and abase ourselves to be worthy of feeling what it is For want whereof many high and proud spirits have been turned aside from it by the right hand of God who would not lead them into its lights and enjoyment because they came as questioners, not as seekers would have walked when they should have stood and would have stood when they should have knelt

Newton Sir I do not know whether you will condescend to listen with patience to the thoughts excited in me by Bacon's observations on the character of a king

Barrow He shocked me by what he said before on the fragility of his title God forbid that common men should talk like the Lord High Chancellor!

Newton I was shocked in a contrary direction and as it were by a repercussion at hearing him call a king a *mortal God on earth* [11] and I do not find anywhere in the Scriptures that 'the living God told him he should die like a man lest he should be proud and flatter himself that God had, with his name, imparted unto him his nature also

Surely, sir God would repent as heartily of having made a king, as we know he repented of having made a man if it were possible his king should have turned out so silly and irrational a creature However vain and foolish, he must find about him, every day such natural wants and desires as could not appertain to a God I made the same remark to my visitor, who said calmly "Bacon in the next sentence hath a saving grace, and speaketh as wisely and pointedly as ever he did. He says, 'Of all kind of men God is the least beholden to them for he doth'

[11 The quotations in this and the following two paragraphs are from the Essay Of a King (see note 7) The correct reading is 'a mortal God on earth unto whom the living God hath lent his own name as a great honor, but withal told him &c (Spedding's Bacon p 595)]

most for them and they do ordinarily least for him A sentence not very favorable to their admission as pastors of the people and somewhat strong against them as visible heads of the Church But Mr Newton you will detect at once a deficiency of logic in the words That king that holds not religion the best reason of state is void of all piety and justice, the supporters of a king Supposing a king soundly minded and well educated —a broad supposition and not easily entering our preliminaries,—may not he be just be pious be religious without holding his religion as the best reason of state or the best guide in it? Must he be void of *all* piety and *all* justice who sometimes thinks other reasons of state more applicable to his purposes than religion? Psalms and sack cloth are admirable things but these, the last expedients of the most contrite religion, will not always keep an enemy from burning your towns and violating your women when a few pieces of cannon, and ſoftness of spirit instead of humiliation will do it

He went on and asserted that the king is not the sole fountain[1] of honor as he is called in the Essay and cannot be more fairly entitled so than the doctors in convocation He remarked that the king had not made him master of arts which dignity he said, requires more merit than the peerage whereupon he named several in that order of whose learning or virtues I never heard mention and even of who titles I thought I never had until he assured me I must, and expressed his wonder that I had forgotten them When he came to the eighth section,—"he is the life of the law,'—"the law leads a notoriously bad life, said he 'and therefore I would exempt his Majesty from the imputation and indeed if he animateth the dead letter, making it active toward all his subjects, the parliament and other magistratures are useless In the ninth paragraph he makes some accurate observations, but ends weakly 'He that changeth the fundamental laws of a kingdom thinketh there is no good title to a crown but

[1] See preceding note The following passages read The fountain of honor which should not run a waste pipe lest the courtiers sell the waters and then (as Papists say of their Holy Wells) to lose the vertue "He is the life of the law not only as he is *lex loquen* himself but because he animateth the dead letter making it active towards all his subjects (p 595)]

by conquest.' What! if he changes them from the despotic to the liberal?—if, knowing the first possession to have been obtained by conquest he convokes the different orders of his people, and requests their assent to the statutes he presents? Nothing can be more pedantic than the whole of the sixteenth section

Barrow But there are sound truths in it, and advice too good to be taken every day

Newton *On Nobility* —

'A great and potent nobility putteth life and spirit into the people *but presseth their fortune*

The man must have turned fool said my friend to write thus Are life and spirit put into people by the same means as their fortune is depressed?'

On Atheism —

"'The fool hath said in his heart there is no God It is not said 'The fool hath *thought* in his heart

No, nor is it necessary for to say *in his heart* is to think *within himself* to be *intimately convinced*

'It appeareth in nothing more, that atheism is rather in the lip than in the heart of man than by this —that atheists will ever be talking of that their opinion as if they fainted in it themselves, and would be glad to be strengthened by the consent of others nay more you shall have atheists strive to get disciples as it fareth with other sects'

So great is my horror at atheists, that I would neither reason *with* them nor about them but surely they are as liable to conceit and vanity as other men are, and as proud of leading us captive to their opinions I could wish the noble author had abstained from quoting Saint Bernard to prove the priesthood to have been, even in those days more immoral than the laity and I am shocked at hearing that '*learned times* especially with peace and prosperity tend toward atheism Better blind ignorance, better war and pestilence and famine—

Barrow Gently, gently! God may forgive his creature for not knowing him when he meets him but less easily for fighting against him, after talking to him and supping with him, less easily for breaking his image, set up by him at every door,—and such is man, less easily for a series of fratricides,—and such is war

Newton I am wrong and here again let me repeat the strange paradox of my visitor rather than hazard another fault In the words about *Superstition* he agreed that Bacon spoke wisely —

It were better to have no opinion of God at all than such an opinion as is unworthy of him for he one is unbelief the other is contumely '

And here remarked my visitor, it is impossible not to look back with wonder on the errors of some among the wisest men, following the drift of a distorted education or resting on the suggestions of a splenetic disposition I am no poet, and therefore am ill qualified to judge the merits of the late Mr Milton in that capacity yet being of a serious and somewhat of a religious turn I was shocked greatly more at his deity than at his devil I know not what interest he could have in making Satan so august a creature and so ready to share the dangers and sorrows of the angels he had seduced I know not on the other hand, what could have urged him to make the better ones so distantly that even at the voice of their Creator not one among them offered his service to rescue from eternal perdition the last and weakest of intellectual beings Even his own Son sat silent and undertook the mission but slowly although the trouble was momentary if compared with his everlasting duration and the pain small if compared with his anterior and future bliss Far be it from me, cried he—

Barrow Did he cry so —then I doubt whatever he said for those are precisely the words that all your sanctified rogues begin their lies with Well let us hear however what he asserted

Newton ' Far be it from me Mr Newton, to lessen the merits of our Divine Redeemer I, on the contrary am indignant that poets and theologians should frequently lean toward it.

Barrow Did he look at all indignant ?

Newton He looked quite calm

Barrow Ha ! I thought so I doubt your friend's sincerity

Newton He is a very sincere man

Barrow So much the worse

Newton How ?

Barrow We will discourse another time upon this I

meant only — what we may easily elucidate when we meet again At present we have three-fourths of the volume to get through

Newton 'Atheism leaves a man to sense, to philosophy, to natural piety to laws, to reputation all which may be guides to an outward moral virtue though religion were not but superstition dismounts all these and erecteth an *absolute monarchy* in the minds of men therefore atheism did never perturb States

Again 'We see the times inclined to atheism as the times of Augustus Cæsar were civil times but superstition hath been the confusion of many States

I wish the noble author had kept to himself the preference he gives atheism over superstition for if it be just as it seems to be it follows that we should be more courteous and kind toward an atheist than toward a loose Catholic or rigid sectary

Barrow I see no reason why we should not be courteous and kind toward men of all persuasions, provided we are certain that neither by their own inclination nor by the instigation of another they would burn us alive to save our souls or invade our conscience for the pleasure of carrying it with them in their girdles

Atheism would make men have too little to do with others superstition makes them wish to have too much Atheism would make some fools superstition makes many madmen Atheism would oftener be in good humor than superstition is out of bad I could bring many more and many stronger arguments in support of Bacon, and the danger would be little in adducing them, for the current runs violently in a contrary direction, and will have covered every thing with slime and sand before atheism can have her turn against it

Newton If *atheism did never perturb States*, as Bacon asserts, then nothing is more unjust than to punish it by the arm of the civil power It was impolitic in him to remind the world that it was peaceful and happy for sixty years together, while those who ruled it were atheists when we must acknowledge that it never has been happy or peaceful for so many days at a time, under the wisest and most powerful (as they call the present one)

of the *Most Christian* kings For if the observation and the fact be true and if it also be true that the most rational aim of man is happiness then must it follow that his most rational wish —and being his most rational therefore his most innocent and laudable —is the return of such times

Barrow We will go forward to the Essay *On Empire*

Newton I do not think the writer is correct in saying that "kings want matter of desire" Wherever there is vacuity of mind there must either be flaccidity or craving and this vacuity must necessarily be found in the greater part of princes from the defects of their education from the fear of offending them in its progress by interrogations and admonitions from the habit of rendering all things valueless by the facility with which they are obtained and transitory by the negligence with which they are received and holden

Princes many times make themselves desires, and set their hearts upon toys —sometimes upon a building, sometimes upon erecting of an order sometimes upon obtaining excellency in some art or feat of the hand

On which my visitor said The latter desire is the least common among them Whenever it does occur it arises from idleness, and from the habitude of doing what they ought not. For, commendable as such exercises are in those who have no better and higher to employ their time in they are unbecoming and injurious in kings all whose hours after needful recreation and the pleasures which all men share alike, should be occupied in taking heed that those under them perform their duties

Barrow Bacon lived in an age when the wisest men were chosen from every rank and condition for the administration of affairs Wonderful is it that one mind on this subject should have pervaded all the princes in Europe not excepting the Turk and that we cannot point out a prime minister of any nation, at that period deficient in sagacity or energy * Yet

* There is a remark in a preceding Essay which could not be noticed in the text —

As for the acquaintance which is to be sought in travel that which is most of all profitable is acquaintance with the *resta at employ dm* of embassadors for so in travelling in one country he shall suck the experience of many

This whatever it may appear to us was not ludicrous nor sarcastic

that even the greatest, so much greater than any we have had since among us, did not come up to the standard he had fixed, is evident enough

The wisdom says he "of *all these latter times* in princes' affairs, is rather fine deliveries and *shifting of dangers and mischiefs* when they are near than solid and grounded courses to keep them aloof but this is but to try mastries with fortune And let men beware how they neglect and suffer matter of trouble to be prepared for no man can forbid the spark, nor tell whence it may come

Newton Sir, it was on this passage that my friend exclaimed, The true philosopher is the only true prophet From the death of this the brightest in both capacities a few years opened the entire scroll of his awful predictions Yet age after age will the same truths be disregarded even though men of a voice as deep and a heart less hollow should repeat them Base men must raise new families though the venerable edifice of our Constitution be taken down for the abutments, and broken fortunes must be soldered in the flames of war blown up for the occasion

On this subject he himself too lax and easy Among the reasons for legitimate war he reckons the *embracing of trade* He seems unwilling to speak plainly yet he means to signify that we may declare war against a nation for her prosperity a prosperity raised by her industry by the honesty of her dealings and by excelling us in the quality of her commodity, in the exactness of workmanship in punctuality and in credit

Barrow Hell itself with all its jealousy and malignity and falsehood could not utter a sentence more pernicious to the interests and improvement of mankind It is the duty of every State to provide and watch that not only no other in its vicinity, but that no other with which it has dealings immediate or remoter do lose an inch of territory or a farthing of wealth by aggression Princes fear at their next door rather the example of good than of bad Correct your own ill habits, and you need not dread your rivals Let him have them, and wear them every day,—if indeed a Christian may propose it,—and they will unfit him for competition with you

when Bacon wrote it but might be applied as well to the embassadors and secretaries of England as of other States

Newton I now come to the words *On Counsel* "The doctrine of Italy and practice of France, in some kings' times hath introduced *cabinet counsels* a remedy worse than the disease *Cabinet—council!* It does indeed seem a strange apposition One would sooner have expected *cabinet cards* and *counters*, *cabinet miniature pictures*,—or what not!

Barrow Isaac! if you had conversed as I have with some of those persons who constitute such councils you would think the word *cabinet* quite as applicable to them as to cards or counters or miniature pictures, or essences or pots of pomatum

Newton How then in the name of wonder are the great matters of government carried on?

Barrow Great dinners are put upon the table not by the entertainer, but by the waiters There are usually some dexterous hands accustomed to the business The same weights are moved by the same ropes and pulleys There is no vast address required in hooking them, and no mighty strength in the hauling

Newton I have taken but few notes of some admirable things in my way to the Essay *On Cunning*

Barrow I may remind you hereafter of some omissions in other places

Newton I find Bacon no despiser of books in men of business as people mostly are

Barrow Because they know little of them and fancy they could manage the whole world by their genius This is the commonest of delusions in the shallows of society Well doth Bacon say, 'There be that can pack the cards and yet cannot play well so there are some that are good in canvasses and factions that are otherwise weak men

Fortunate the country that is not the dupe of these intruders and bustlers who often rise to the highest posts by their readiness to lend an arm at every stepping stone in the dirt, and are found as convenient in their way as the candle snuffers in gaming houses who have usually their *rouleau* at the service of the half ruined

Newton I am sorry to find my Lord High Chancellor wearing as little the face of an honest man as doth one of these

Barrow How so?

Newton He says, "If a man would cross a business, that he doubts some other would handsomely and effectually move, let

him pretend to wish it well and move it himself in such sort as may foil it

What must I think of such counsel?

Barrow Bacon, as I observed before, often forgets his character Sometimes he speaks the language of truth and honesty, with more freedom than a better man could do safely, again he teaches a lesson of business and roguery to the public, such as he could intend only for the private ear of some young statesman before his rehearsal on the stage of politics The words from the prompter's book have crept into the text, and injure the piece Bacon might not have liked to cancel the directions he had given so much to his mind, instead of which, he draws himself up and cries austerely But these small wares and petty points of cunning are infinite and it were a good deed to make a list of them, for nothing doth more hurt in a State than that cunning men pass for wise

Newton He has other things about wisdom in another place 'Of the wisdom for a man's self

Barrow I must repeat one noble sentence for I fear if you begin to read it I may interrupt you not being master of my mind when his comes over it "Divide with reason between self love and society and be so true to thyself as thou be not false to others especially to thy king and country It is a poor centre of a man's actions, himself it is right earth for that only stands fast upon his own centre whereas all things that have affinity with the heavens move upon the centre of another, which they benefit'

What an imagination is Bacon's what splendid and ardent language! In what prose writer of our country or of Rome or of Greece is there any thing equal or similar to it!

Newton *On Innovations* I find the sentence which I have heard oftener quoted than any in the volume 'Time is the greatest innovator

We take the axiom up without examination, it is doubtful and inconsiderate Does it mean much time or little time? By a *great* innovator we must either signify an innovator in great matters, or in many at once, or nearly at once Now time is slow in innovation of any kind, and all great innovations are violences, as it were, done to time, crowding into a small space what would in

ordinary cases occupy a larger Time without other agents, would innovate little for the portions of time are all the same and, being so their forces must be the same likewise

Barrow That satisfies me

Newton Truth and falsehood are the two great innovators always at work and sometimes the one uppermost and sometimes the other

Barrow Let us engage ourselves in the service of truth where the service is not perilous and let us win time to help us for without him few cannot stand against many

Newton *On Friendship* there are some things which sit loose upon the subject The *utility* of it seems to be principally in the view of Bacon Some positions are questionable —

Certain it is that whosoever hath his mind fraught with many thoughts his wits and understanding do clarify and break up in the communicating and discoursing with another he tosseth his thoughts more easily he marshalleth them more orderly he seeth how they look when they are turned into words finally he waxeth wiser than himself and that more by an hour's discourse than by a day's meditation

This I conceive is applicable to one frame of mind but not to another of equal capacity and elasticity I admire the ingenuity of the thought and the wording of it nevertheless I doubt whether it suits not better the mind of an acute lawyer than of a contemplative philosopher Never have I met with any one whose thoughts are *marshalled more orderly* in conversation than in composition, nor am I acquainted in the University with any gentleman of fluent speech whose ideas are not frequently left dry upon the bank Cicero and Demosthenes were laborious in composition, and their replies were, I doubt not, as much studied as their addresses For it was a part of the orator to foresee the points of attack to which his oration was exposed, and to prepare the materials and the arrangement of them for defending it

"It was well said by Themistocles to the king of Persia, that speech was like cloth of *Arras*" &c

Themistocles might as well have spoken of velvet of Genoa and satin of Lyons

On Expense there is much said quite worthy of Bacon's experience and prudence, but he lays down one rule which I think I can demonstrate to be injurious in its tendency —

"If a man will keep but of even hand his ordinary expenses ought to be but to the half of his receipts and if he think to wax rich but to the third part'

Should all private gentlemen and others who are not gentlemen, but whose income is of the same value spend only the third part of it the nation would be more nearly ruined within the century than it would be if every one of them mortgaged his property to half its amount

A wiser saying comes soon afterward where he speaks *On the True Greatness of Kingdoms and Estates* —

'No people overcharged with tribute is fit for empire

How happy my dear sir is our condition in having been ever both generous and thrifty ready at all times to succor the oppressed, and condescending on this holy occasion to ask the countenance of none! How happy to have marched straight forward in the line of duty with no policy to thwart no penury to enfeeble and no debt to burthen us! Although our nobility is less magnificent than in the reign of the Tudors, I do verily believe it is as free and independent and its hospitality, so conducive (as Bacon says) to martial greatness is the same as ever, although the quality of the guests be somewhat changed

Barrow Isaac! are you serious?

Newton Dear sir the subject animates me

Barrow What sparkles is hardly more transparent than what is turbid Your animation, my friend perplexed me I perceive you are vehemently moved by the glory of our country

Newton As we derive a great advantage from the nature of our nobility, so do we derive an equal one from the dispositions and occupations of the people How unfortunate would it be for us, if we had artisans cooped up like tame pigeons in unwholesome lofts bending over the loom by tallow-light, and refreshing their exhausted bodies at daybreak with ardent liquors! Indeed, in comparison with this, the use of slaves itself, which Bacon calls a great advantage, was almost a blessing

Barrow Let us not speculate on either of these curses, which may not be felt as such when they come upon us, for we shall be stunned and torpified by the greatness of our fall

What have you next?

Newton. On Suspicion I find an Italian proverb, which the

learned author has misconstrued 'Sospetto licenzia fede' he translates, 'Suspicion gives a passport to faith' The meaning is (my visitor tells me) 'Suspicion dismisses fidelity' 'Licenziare un servitore,' is, *to dismiss a servant* That the person suspected is no longer bound to fidelity is the axiom of a nation in which fidelity is readier to quit a man than suspicion is

It cost me many hours of inquiry to search into the propriety of his thoughts *Upon Ambition* He says It is counted by some a weakness in princes to have favorites but it is *of all others* the best remedy against ambitious great ones for when the way of pleasuring and displeasuring lieth by the favorite it is impossible any other should be overgreat

I hope and am willing to believe that my Lord Chancellor Bacon was a true and loyal subject yet one would almost be tempted to think in reading him that there must be a curse in hereditary princes and that he had set his private mark upon it when he praises their use of favorites and supposes them surrounded by mean persons and ambitious ones by poisons and counterpoisons Sejanus and Tigellinus our Gravestons and Mortimers our Empsons and Dudleys our Wolseys and Buckinghams are like certain fumigations to drive away rats which indeed do drive them out but also make the house undesirable to inhabit He recommends "the continual interchange of favors and disgraces whereby they may not know what to expect, and be, as it were in a wood

Barrow By the effect of this policy we find the countenances of the statesmen and courtiers who lived in his age almost without exception mean and suspicious The greatest men look in their portraits as if they were waiting for a box on the ear lowering their heads, rusing their shoulders, and half closing their eyes, for the reception of it

Newton What he says *Of Nature in Men* seems spoken by some one who saw through it from above the same *On Custom and Education* Here he speaks with more verity than consolation, when he says "There[13] be not two more fortunate properties, than to have a little of the fool and not too much of the honest therefore extreme lovers of their country were never

[13 The passage is from the Essay Of Fortune]

fortunate neither can they be, for when a man placeth his thoughts without himself he goeth not his own way

In the Essay *On Youth and Age*, what can be truer, what can be more novel or more eloquent than this sentence —

"Men of age object too much, consult too long adventure too little repent too soon, and seldom drive business home to the full period but content themselves with a mediocrity of success

What he says *Of Beauty* is less considerate

Barrow I do not wonder at it beauty is not stripped in a Court of Chancery as fortune is

Newton He is inconsequent in his reasoning when he says 'There is no excellent beauty that hath not some strangeness in the proportion A man cannot tell whether Apelles or Albert Durer were the more trifler *whereof* the one would make a personage by geometrical proportions the other, by taking the best parts out of divers faces to make one excellent.

Barrow *Whereof* is of *which* not of *whom*

Newton If 'there is no excellent beauty that hath not some strangeness in the proportion then Apelles was no trifler in taking the best parts of *divers faces* which would produce *some strangeness in the proportion* unless he corrected it

Barrow True Bacon's first remark, however, is perfectly just and novel What strikes us in beauty is that which we did not expect to find from anything we had seen before a new arrangement of excellent parts The same thing may be said of genius, the other great gift of the Divinity, not always so acceptable to his creatures but which however has this advantage if you will allow it to be one that, whereas beauty has most admirers at its first appearance, genius has most at its last, and begins to be commemorated in the period when the other is forgotten

Newton What you said of beauty, as striking us chiefly in being unexpected from any thing we had seen before, is applicable no less to ugliness

Barrow I am not giving a definition, but recording an[14] observation, which would be inexact without the remaining words, —"*a new* arrangement of excellent parts."

Newton Our author errs more widely than before, not, as

[[14] First ed reads recording a fact *Note* One &c]

before in drawing a false conclusion Such personages he continues to remark 'I think would please nobody but the painter who made them not but I think a painter may make a better face than ever was but he must do it by a kind of felicity (as a musician that maketh an excellent air in music) and not by rule' Nothing of excellent is to be done by felicity

Barrow Felicity and excellence rarely meet, and hardly know one another

Newton Certainly no musician ever composed *an excellent air* otherwise than by rule felicity is without it

Barrow Beauty does not seem to dazzle but to deceive him He reasons that the principal part of beauty lies in *decent motion*, and asserts that "no youthy person can be comely but by pardon and by considering the youth is to make up the comeliness Much of this reflection may have been fashioned and cast by the age of the observer much by the hour of the day I think it must have been a rainy morning, when he had eaten unripe fruit for breakfast!

Newton Perhaps sour grapes

On Deformity I have transcribed a long sentence here he seems more at home —

'Because there is in man an election touching the frame of his mind and a necessity in the frame of his body the stars of natural inclination are sometimes obscured by the sun of discipline and virtue, therefore it is good to consider of deformity not as a sign which is most deceivable, but as a cause which seldom faileth of the effect

Nothing can be truer in all its parts, or more magnificent in the whole

Barrow This short Essay is worth many libraries of good books Several hundreds of esteemed authors have not in them the substance and spirit of the sentence you recited

Newton *On Building* he says 'Houses are built to live in and not to look on'

Half of this is untrue Sheds and hovels, the first habitations (at least the first artificial ones) of men, were built to live in, and not to look on, but houses are built for both otherwise why give directions for the proportions of porticos, of columns of intercolumniations, and of whatever else delights the beholder in

architecture and flatters the possessor? Is the beauty of cities no honor to the inhabitants no excitement to the defence? External order in visible objects hath relation and intercourse with internal propriety and decorousness I doubt not but the beauty of Athens had much effect on the patriotism and some on the genius, of the Athenians Part of the interest and animation men receive from Homer lies in their conception of the magnificence of Troy Even the little rock of Ithaca rears up its palaces sustained by pillars and pillars are that portion of an edifice on which the attention rests longest and most complacently For we have no other means of calculating so well the grandeur of edifices as by the magnitude of the support they need and it is the only thing about them which we measure in any way by our own

"Neither do I reckon it an ill seat only where the air is unwholesome, but likewise where the air is unequal as you shall see many fine seats set upon a knap of ground environed with higher hills round about it, whereby the heat of the sun is pent in and the wind gathereth as in troughs, &c

Now surely this very *knap of ground* is the very spot to be chosen for the commodiousness of its situation, it salubrity, and its beauty There is as little danger of the wind gathering in these *troughs* as in goat skins He must have taken his idea from some Italian work the remark is suitable only to a southern climate

Barrow In one so rainy as ours is it would have been more judicious, I think, to have warned against building the house upon clay or marl, which are retentive of moisture slippery nine months in the twelve cracked the other three of a color offensive to the sight, of a soil little accommodating to garden-plants, the water usually unwholesome, and the roads impassable

Newton On Negotiating I am sorry to find again our Lord Chancellor a dissembler and a tutor to lies —

"To deal in person is good when a man's face breedeth regard, as commonly with inferiors, or in tender cases where a man's eye upon the countenance of him with whom he speaketh may give him a direction how far to go *and generally where a man will reserve to himself liberty either to disavow or to expound*"

Barrow Bad enough but surely he must appear to you any

thing rather than knave, when he recommends *the employment of froward and absurd men* be the business what it may

Newton He recommends them for *business which doth not well bear out itself* and in which, one would think, the wariest are the most wanted

Barrow But like men who have just tripped he walks the firmer and stouter instantly The remainder of the Essay is worthy of his perspicacity

Newton In the next *On Followers and Friends* I find the word *espial* used by him a second time for a minister the French call *espion* It appears to me that it should denote not the *person* but the *action*, as the same termination is used in *trial*

Barrow Right We want some words in composition as we want some side dishes at table less for necessity than for decoration On this principle, I should not quarrel with a writer who had used the verb *originate* on condition however that he used it as a neuter none but a sugar slave would employ it actively It may stand opposite to *terminate*

Bacon in the preceding sentence used *glorious* for *vain glorious* a Latinism among the many of the age and among the few of the author Our language bears Gallicisms better than Latinisms but whoever is resolved to write soberly must be contented with the number of each that was found among us in the time of the Reformation Little is to be rejected of what was then in use, and less of any thing new is henceforward to be admitted By which prudence and caution we may in time have writers as elegant as the Italian and the French, whom already we exceed as this little volume proves in vigor and invention

Newton He says, further on It is true that in government it is good to use men of one rank equally for to countenance some extraordinarily is to make them insolent and the rest discontent, because they may claim a due but contrariwise in favor to use men with much difference and election is good for it maketh the persons preferred more thankful, and the rest more officious, because all is of favor

Here again I am sorry so great an authority should, to use the words of my visitor, let his conscience run before his judgment, and his tongue slip in between "In saying that all is of favor

(thus carps my visitor) he gives a preference to another form of government over the monarchal another form indeed where all is not of favor where something may be attributed to virtue, something to industry something to genius where something may accrue to us from the gratitude of our fellow-citizens and not every thing drop and drivel from the frothy pulings of one swathed up in bandages never changed nor loosened of one held always in the same arms and with its face turned always in the same direction

Barrow Hold! hold! this is as bad as Bacon or Milton nay, Cicero and Demosthenes, in the blindness of their hearts, could scarcely have spoken to the nations they guided, with more contemptuous asperity of royal power

Newton I venerate it as coming of God

Barrow Hold again! all things come from him the hangman and the hanged are in the same predicament with the anointer and the anointed

Newton Sir, you remind me of an observation made in my father's house by the son of a republican and who indeed was little better than one himself My father had upbraided him on his irreverence to the Lord's anointed he asked my father why he allowed his mind to be lime-twigged and ruffled and discomposed by words and whether he would feel the same awe in repeating the syllables *God's greased*, as in repeating the syllables *God's anointed* If the Esquimaux heard them said he they would think the man no better reared than themselves, and worse dressed, as dressed by one less in practice

Barrow No men are so facetious as those whose minds are somewhat perverted Truth enjoys good air and clear light, but no play-ground Keep your eyes upon Bacon we may more safely look on him than on thrones How wise is all the remainder of the Essay!

Newton He says, *On Suitors*, and truly, that "Private suits do putrefy the public good Soon afterward, "Some embrace suits *which* never mean to deal effectually in them This seems ordinary and flat, but the words are requisite to a sentence founded (I fear) on a close observation of human nature, as courts render it. I noted them as presenting an incorrectness and indecision of language *Who* is proper, not *which* although

which was used indiscriminately, as we find in the beginning of the Lord's Prayer but in that place there could be no confusion

Barrow Among the few crudities and barbarisms that yet oppressed our language in his learned age Bacon has this 'A man *were better rise* in his suit Indeed he uses *were better* more than once with the simple verb after it, and without *to*

Newton On Studies he cannot lose his road having trodden it so frequently and having left his mark upon so many objects all the way Therefore it is no wonder that his genius points with a finger of fire to this subject

He says *On Faction*, that 'Many a man's strength is in opposition and when that faileth he groweth out of use He must have written from inspiration for in his age I find no person to whom he can have alluded

Barrow Perhaps not yet the preceding may have furnished him with examples

Newton In the first sentence *On Ceremonies and Respects* are the words 'He that is only real had need have exceeding great parts of virtue This weighty and sorrowful truth does not prevent me from questioning the expression *had need have*

Barrow The true words which all authors write amiss, are *ha* need *of Ha need* sounds like *had need* and *have* sounds like *of*, in speaking quickly Hence the wisest men have written the words improperly, by writing at once from the ear without an appeal or reference to grammar

Newton On Praise he says ingeniously but not altogether truly 'Fame is like a river, that beareth up things light and swollen, and drowns things weighty and solid

Barrow This is true only of literary fame and the drowned things are brought to light again sometimes by the warmer season and sometimes by the stormier

He uses *suspect* for *suspicion* we retain *aspect, respect retrospect prospect* I know not whether the chancellor's award in favor of *suspect* will be repealed or acquiesced in

Newton In the next Essay, *On Vain glory*, he says "In fame of learning the flight will be slow without some feathers of ostentation" That is hard, if true

Barrow There must be a good deal of movement and shuffling before there is any rising from the ground and those who have the longest wings have the most difficulty in the first mounting In literature as at foot-ball strength and agility are insufficient of themselves you must have your *side* or you may run till you are out of breath and kick till you are out of shoes and never win the game There must be some to keep others off you and some to prolong for you the ball's rebound But your figures dear Isaac will serve as tenterhooks to catch the fingers of those who would meddle with your letters Do not however be ambitious of an early fame such is apt to shrivel and to drop under the tree

Newton The author continues the same subject in the next Essay though under a different title *Of Honor and Reputation* he says "Discreet followers and servants help much to reputation Then he who has no servant or an indiscreet one must be content to be helped to little of it

Barrow [15] Seeing that reputation is casual that the wise may long want it, that the unwise may soon acquire it that a servant may further it that a spiteful man may obstruct it that a passionate man may maim it and that whole gangs are ready to waylay it as it mounts the hill —I would not wish greatly to carry it about me but rather to place it in some safe spot, where few could find and not many will look after it But those who discover it will try in their hands its weight and quality, and take especial care lest they injure it saying, "It is his and his only leave it to him and wish him increase in it

Newton Where Bacon is occupied 'in the true marshalling of sovran honor, he gives the third place to *liberatores* or *salvatores* He wishes to speak in Latin, one of these words belongs not to the language

Barrow His Latin is always void of elegance and grace, but he had the generosity to write in it, that he might be useful the more extensively We English are far below the Italians, French, Germans, and Dutch in our Latinity yet we have Latin volumes written by our countrymen, each of which, in its matter, is fairly worth half theirs. They, like certain fine gentlemen, seem to found their ideas of elegance on slenderness, and in

[15 *Barrow* and the following *Newton* added in 2nd ed.]

twenty or thirty of them we hardly find a thought or remark at all worthy of preservation I remember but one sentence which however, if Cicero had written it would be recorded among the best he ever wrote Valuit nimirum maledicentia, grata, cunctis etiam iis qui neque sibi maledici neque maledicere ipsi alios velint

Newton[16] Permit me to inquire, sir by whom was this strong and shrewd and truly Sallustian sentence written

Barrow By Vavassor, a Jesuit

It may be remarked and perhaps you have done it that the title itself of this Essay *The True Marshalling of sovran Honor* is incorrect By *marshalling* he means *the giving of rates or degrees* now what is *sovran* has no rates or degrees he should have said of titles assumed by sovran princes

Newton In the first sentence *On Judicature*, he uses the singular and plural in designating the same body either is admissible but not both —

Else will it be like the authority claimed by the Church of Rome which under pretext of exposition of Scripture *doth* not stick to add and alter and to pronounce that which *they* do not find and by show of antiquity to introduce novelty

What gravity and wisdom is there in the remark that, One foul sentence doth more hurt than many foul examples for these do but corrupt the stream the other corrupteth the fountain

The worst, and almost the only bad sentence in the volume is the childish antithesis 'There be sixth the Scripture, that turn judgment into wormwood and surely there be also that turn it into vinegar for injustice maketh it bitter, and delays make it sour

On the Vicissitudes of Things he observes that 'the true religion is built upon the rock, the rest are tossed upon the waves of time My[17] visitor said hereupon "I doubt whether this magnificent figure hath truth for its basis If by true religion is meant the religion of our Saviour, as practised by his apostles,

[16 From *Next* to Jesuit (3 lines) added in 2nd ed The words below The true marshalling of sovran honor are not the title of an Essay but occur in the text of the Essay On Honors and Dignities]

[17 From My to hereupon added in 2nd ed]

they outlived it They complain that it never took firm possession even of their own auditors Saint Peter himself was reproved by his master for using his sword too vigorously after all he had said against any use of it whatever yet so little good did the reproof he fell immediately to betraying the very man he had thus defended But if by true religion we mean the Church of Rome we come nearer the fact for that religion with patchings and repairings with materials purloined from others with piles driven under the foundation and buttresses without that darken every thing within, surmounted by pinnacles raised above the upper story hath lasted long and will remain while men are persuaded that wax and stockfish can atone for their vices The obstacle to our acceptance of the meaning is that it hath been convicted of many impostures in its claims and miracles that it continues to insist on them and that it uses violence (which is forbidden by Christ) against those who stumble or doubt

Barrow Deafness is not to be healed by breaking the head nor blindness by pulling the eyes out it is time the doctors should try new experiments if they will not, it is time that the patients should try new doctors

Newton A bad religion may be kept afoot by the same means as other kinds of bad government, by corruption and terror, by spies and torturers No doubt it will please God to see all things set to rights but we must acknowledge that the best religion, like the best men, has fared the worst

Bacon says he "reckons martyrdoms among miracles because they *seem* to exceed the strength of human nature If they did *seem* to exceed the strength of human nature this is no sufficient reason why they should be ranked with miracles for martyrdoms have appertained to many religions if we may call voluntary death to prove a misbeliever's sincerity a martyrdom, while we know that miracles belong exclusively to the Christian and even in this faith there are degrees of latitude and longitude which they were never known to pass, although, humanly speaking they were much wanted The Lithuanians, and other north-eastern nations, were long before they were reclaimed from paganism, for want of miracles God's good time had not come and he fell upon different expedients for their conversion

On the Vicissitudes of Things we find mention of Plato's great

year I think you once told me Plato took more from others than he knew what to do with

Barrow Instead of simplifying, he involves and confounds

Newton I hope hereafter to study the heavenly bodies with greater accuracy and on other principles than philosophers have done hitherto The reasons of Bacon why 'the northern tract of the world is the more martial region are unworthy of his perspicacity First he assigns the stars of the hemisphere then the greatness of the continent whereas the south part is almost all sea then the cold of the northern parts which is that which without aid of discipline doth make the bodies hardest and the courage warmest The stars can have no effect whatever on the courage or virtues of men unless we call the sun one of them as the poets do The heat of the sun may produce effeminacy and sloth in many constitutions and contrary effects in many but I suspect that dryness and moisture are more efficient on the human body than heat and cold Some races as in dogs and horses and cattle of every kind are better than others and do not lose their qualities for many ages nor unless others cross them without the confluence of many causes There may be as much courage in hot climates as in cold The inhabitants of Madagascar and Malacca are braver than the Esplanders and perhaps not less brave than the Londoners The fact is this people in warm climates use the full enjoyment of all the pleasures that animal life affords and are disinclined to toil after that which no toil could produce or increase while the native of the north is condemned by climate to a life of labour which often times can procure for him but a scanty portion of what his vehement and exasperated appetite demands Therefore he cuts it short with his sword, and reaps the field sown by the southern

Bacon seems to me just in his opinion if not that *ordnance* at least that inflammable powder and annoyance by its means perhaps in rockets was known among the ancients He instances the Oxydracæ in India The remark is, I imagine equally applicable to the priests of Delphi who repelled the Gauls with it from the temple of Apollo This[18] is the more remarkable as the Persians too encountered the same resistance, and experienced

[18 From This to exploded (5 lines) added in 2nd ed]

the double force of *thunderbolts and earthquake* Whence we may surmise that not only missiles propelled by the combustion of powder were aimed against them but likewise that mines exploded And perhaps other priests the only people in most places who formerly had leisure for experiments were equally acquainted with it, and used it for their own defence only and only in cases of extremity Etruscan [19] soothsayers were appointed to blast the army of Alaric with lightning and the Pope acceded to the proposal but his Holiness on reflection was of opinion that *aurum fulminans* was more effectual

I wish the Essay *On Fame* had been completed and even then its chief effect on me perhaps would be to excite another wish as gratification usually does It would have made me sigh for the recovery of Cicero *On Glory* that the two greatest of philosophers might be compared on the same ground

Barrow Let us look up at Fame without a desire or a repining and let us pardon all her falsehoods and delays in remembrance that the best verse in Homer and the best in Virgil are on her Virgil's is indeed but a feather from the wing of Homer

Newton You show a very forgiving mind sir and I hope she will be grateful to you I do not know what these lines are worth, as they give me no equations

Barrow Nothing should be considered quite independently of every thing else We owe reverence to all great writers but our reverence to one would be injustice to another unless we collated and compared their merits

Newton Some are so dissimilar to others, that I know not how it can be done

Barrow Liquids and solids are dissimilar, yet may be weighed in the same scales All things are composed of portions, and all things bear proportions relatively —mind to mind, matter to matter Archimedes and Homer are susceptible of comparison but the process would be long and tedious, the principles must be sought from afar, nor is the man perhaps at the next door who must be called for the operation Bacon and Milton, Bacon and Shakspeare may be compared with little difficulty wide asunder as they appear to stand How-

[19 From Etruscan to effectual (4 lines) added in 2nd ed]

ever, since the cogitative and imaginative parts of mind are exercised by both in broad daylight and in open spaces the degrees in which they are exercised are within our calculation Until we bring together the weightiest works of genius from the remotest distances, we shall display no admirable power of criticism None such hath been hitherto exhibited in the world which stands in relation to criticism as it stood in relation to metaphysics until the time of Aristoteles He left them imperfect and they have lain little better ever since The good sense of Cicero led him to clearer studies and wholesomer exercise and where he could not pluck fruit he would not pluck brambles In Plato we find only arbors and grottos with moss and shell work all misplaced Aristoteles hath built a solider edifice but hath built it across our road we must throw it down again, and use what we can of the materials elsewhere

Newton Bacon seen only in his *Essays* would have appeared to me (fresh as I come from the study of the ancients and captivated as I confess I am by the graces of their language) the wisest and most instructive of writers

Barrow In calling him the wisest of writers you must except those who wrote from inspiration

Newton Ha! that is quite another thing

Barrow Henceforward I would advise you to follow the bent of your genius in examining those matters principally which are susceptible of demonstration Every young man should have some proposed end for his studies let yours be philosophy and principally those parts of it in which the ancients have done little and the moderns less And never be dejected my dear Isaac though it should enable you to throw but a scarcity of light on the *Revelation* *The Rape of Helen* and *The Golden Fleece*

Newton I hope by my labors I may find a clew to them in the process of time But perhaps my conjectures may turn out wrong as those on the book before me have

Barrow How?

Newton I should always have imagined if you had not taught me the contrary, that there is more of genius and philosophy in Bacon's *Essays* than in all Cicero's works, however

less there be of the scholastic and oratorical Perhaps I, by being no estimator of style-

Barrow Peace, peace! my modest Newton! Perhaps I, by being too much an estimator of it have overvalued the clearest head and the purest tongue of antiquity My [0] Lord Justice Coke and probably the more learned Selden would have ridiculed or reproved us had we dared entertain in their presence a doubt of Cicero's superiority over Bacon No very great man ever reached the standard of his greatness in the crowd of his contemporaries This hath always been reserved for the secondary There must either be something of the vulgar some thing in which the commonalty can recognise their own features, or there must be a laxity a jealousy, an excitement stimulating a false appetite Your brief review of the *Essays* hath brought back to my recollection so much of shrewd judgment so much of rich imagery, such a profusion of truths so plain as (without his manner of exhibiting them) to appear almost unimportant that in the various high qualities of the human mind, I must acknowledge not only Cicero but every prose writer among the Greeks, to stand far below him Cicero is least valued for his highest merits his fulness and his perspicuity Bad judges (and how few are not so!) desire in composition the concise and the obscure not knowing that the one most frequently arises from paucity of materials, and the other from inability to manage and dispose them Have you never observed that, among the ignorant in painting, dark pictures are usually called the finest in the collection and grey-bearded heads fit only for the garret, are preferred to the radiance of light and beauty? Have you yourself never thought before you could well measure and calculate, that books and furniture thrown about a room appeared to be in much greater quantities than when they were arranged? At every step we take to gain the approbation of the wise we lose something in the estimation of the vulgar Look within cannot we afford it?

The minds of few can take in the whole of a great author, and fewer can draw him close enough to another for just commensuration A fine passage may strike us less forcibly than one beneath it in beauty from less sensibility in us at the moment, whence less enthusiasm, less quickness of perception, less capacity,

[0] From My to him (16 lines) added in 2nd ed.

less hold You have omitted to remark some of the noblest things in Bacon, often I believe because there is no power of judgment to be shown in the expression of admiration and perhaps too sometimes from the repetition and intensity of delight

Newton Sir I forebore to lift up my hands as a mark of admiration You ordered me to demonstrate, if I could the defects of this wonderful man, unnoticed hitherto

Barrow You have done it to my satisfaction Cicero disdained not in the latter days of his life when he was highest in reputation and dignity to perform a similar office in regard to Epicurus and I wish he had exhibited the same accuracy and attention the same moderation and respect The objections of your friend and visitor are not altogether frivolous take care however lest he by his disceptations move you from your faith If you hold the faith the faith will support you as if you make your bed warm by lying in it your bed will keep you so never mind what the ticking or the wadding may be made of There are few things against which I see need to warn you and not many on which you want advice You are not profuse in your expenditure yet as you like most of the studious are inattentive to money affairs let me guard you against evils following on this negligence worse than the negligence itself Whenever a young man is remarked for it, a higher price is fixed on what he purchases and dishonest men of every description push themselves into his service and often acquire his confidence, not only to the injury of his fortune, but likewise of his credit and respectability Let a gentleman be known to have been cheated of twenty pounds and it costs him forty a year for the remainder of his life Therefore if you detect the cheat, the wisest thing is to conceal it, both for fear of the rogues about your sideboard, and of those more dexterous ones round the green cloth, under the judge in your county assize room

You will become an author ere long and every author must attend to the means of conveying his information The plainness of your style is suitable to your manners and your studies Avoid, which many grave men have not done, words taken from sacred subjects and from elevated poetry these we have seen vilely prostituted Avoid too the society of the barbarians who misemploy them they are vain, irreverent, and irreclaimable to right feelings

The dialogues of Galileo, which you have been studying are written with much propriety and precision I do not urge you to write in dialogue, although the best writers of every age have done it the best parts of Homer and Milton are speeches and replies the best parts of every great historian are the same the wisest men of Athens and of Rome converse together in this manner, as they are shown to us by Xenophon by Plato and by Cicero Whether you adopt such a form of composition —which, if your opinions are new will protect you in part from the hostility all novelty (unless it is vicious) excites,—or whether you choose to go along the unbroken surface of the didactic never look abroad for any kind of ornament Apollo, either as the god of day or the slayer of Python had nothing about him to obscure his clearness or to impede his strength To one of your mild manners, it would be superfluous to recommend equanimity in competition and calmness in controversy How easy is it for the plainest things to be misinterpreted by men not unwise which a calm disquisition sets right!—and how fortunate and opportune is it to find in ourselves that calmness which almost the wisest have wanted, on urgent and grave occasions! If others for a time are preferred to you, let your heart lie sacredly still, and you will hear from it the true and plain oracle that not for ever will the magistracy of letters allow the rancid transparencies of coarse colormen to stand before your propylæa It is time that Philosophy should have her share in our literature; that the combinations and appearances of matter be scientifically considered and luminously displayed Frigid conceits on theological questions heaps of snow on barren crags, compose at present the greater part of our domain volcanoes of politics burst forth from time to time, and vary, without enlivening, the scene

Do not fear to be less rich in the productions of your mind at one season than at another Marshes are always marshes, and pools are pools, but the sea, in those places where we admire it most, is sometimes sea and sometimes dry land sometimes it brings ships into port, and sometimes it leaves them where they can be refitted and equipped The capacious mind neither rises nor sinks, neither labors nor rests, in vain Even in those intervals when it loses the consciousness of its powers, when it swims as it were in vacuity, and feels not what is external nor internal, it acquires or

recovers strength, as the body does by sleep Never try to say things admirably [1] try only to say them plainly for your busines is with the considerate philosopher and not with the polemical assembly If a thing can be demonstrated two ways, demonstrate it in both one will please this man best the other that and pleasure, if obvious and unsought is never to be neglected by those appointed from above to lead us into knowledge Many will readily mount stiles and gates to walk along a footpath in a field, whom the very sight of a bare public road would disincline and weary and yet the place whereto they travel lies at the end of each Your studies are of a nature unsusceptible of much decoration otherwise it would be my duty and my care to warn you against it not merely as idle and unnecessary, but as obstructing your intent The fond of wine are little fond of the sweet or of the new the fond of learning are no fonder of its must than of its dregs Something of the severe hath always been appertaining to order and to grace and the beauty that is not too liberal is sought the most ardently and loved the longest The Graces have their zones and Venus her cestus In the writings of the philosopher are the frivolities of ornament the most ill placed in you would they be particularly who promising to lay open before us an infinity of worlds, should turn aside to display the petals of a double pink

It is dangerous to have any intercourse or dealing with small authors They are as troublesome to handle as easy to discompose, as difficult to pacify, and leave as unpleasant marks on you as small children Cultivate on the other hand the society and friendship of the higher first that you may learn to reverence them, which of itself is both a pleasure and a virtue and then that on proper occasions you may defend them against the malevolent which is a duty And this duty cannot be well and satisfactorily performed with an imperfect knowledge or with an inadequate esteem Habits of respect to our superiors are among the best we can attain if we only remove from our bosom the importunate desire of unworthy advantages from them They belong to the higher department of justice, and will procure for us in due time our portion of it Beside, O Isaac! in this affair our humanity is deeply con-

[1] For admirably 1st ed reads 'well', for plainly 1st ed reads 'clearly']

cerned Think how gratifying how consolatory how all sufficient, are the regards and attentions of such wise and worthy men as you to those whom inferior but more powerful ones some in scarlet some in purple, some (it may be) in ermine vilify or neglect! Many are there to whom we are now indifferent or nearly whom if we had approached them as we ought to have done we should have cherished, loved and honored Let not this reflection which on rude and unequal minds may fall without form and features and pass away like the idlest cloud shadow, be lost on you Old literary men beside age and experience have another quality in common with Nestor they in the literature of the country are praisers of times past, partly from moroseness, and partly from custom and conviction The illiterate on the contrary raise higher than the steeples and dress up in the gaudiest trim, a maypole of their own and dance round it while any rag flutters So tenacious are Englishmen of their opinions that they would rather lose their franchises and almost their lives And this tenacity hath not its hold upon letters only but likewise upon whatever is public I have witnessed it in men guilty of ingratitude of fraud of peculation of prevarication of treachery to friends of insolence to patrons of misleading of colleagues, of abandonment of party, of renunciation of principles, of arrogance to honester men and wiser of humiliation to strumpets for the obtainment of place and profit of every villany in short which unfits not only for the honors of public, but rejects from the confidence of private life And there have been people so maddened by faction that they would almost have erected a monument to such persons hoping to spite and irritate their adversaries and unconscious or heedless that the inscription must be their own condemnation Those who have acted in this manner will repent of it but they will hate you for ever if you foretell them of their repentance It is not the fact nor the consequence, it is the motive, that turns and pinches them and they would think it straightforward and natural to cry out against you, and a violence and a malady to cry out against themselves. The praises they have given they will maintain, and more firmly than if they were due as perjurers stick to perjury more hotly than the veracious to truth Supposing there should be any days of your life unoccupied by study there will not be one without

an argument why parties literary or political should be avoided You are too great to be gregarious and were you to attempt it the gregarious in a mass would turn their heads against you The greater who enter into public life are disposed at last to quit it *retirement with dignity* is their device the meaning of which is, retirement with as much of the public property as can be amassed and carried away This race of great people is very numerous I want before I die to see one or two ready to believe and to act on the belief that there is as much dignity in retiring soon as late with little as with loads with quiet minds and consciences as with ulcerated or discomposed I have already seen some hundred sectaries of that pugnacious pope who being reminded that Christ commanded Peter to put up his sword, replied Yes when he had cut the ear off

To be in right harmony the soul not only must be never out of time but must never lose sight of the theme its Creator's hand hath noted

Why are you peeping over your forefinger into those pages near the beginning of the volume?

Newton I have omitted the notice of several Essays

Barrow There are many that require no observation for peculiarities though perhaps there is not one that any other man could have written

Newton I had something more sir to say—or rather—I had something more sir to ask—about Friendship

Barrow All men but the studious above all must beware in the formation of it Advice or caution on this subject comes immaturely and ungracefully from the young exhibiting a proof either of temerity or suspicion but when you hear it from a man of my age, who has been singularly fortunate in the past and foresees the same felicity in those springing up before him you may accept it as the direction of a calm observer telling you all he has remarked on the greater part of a road which he has nearly gone through and which you have but just entered Never take into your confidence, or admit often into your company any man who does not know, on some important subject more than you do Be his rank, be his virtues, what they may he will be a hindrance to your pursuits, and an obstruction to your greatness If indeed the greatness were such as courts can bestow, and such

as can be laid on the shoulders of a groom and make him look like the rest of the company, my advice would be misplaced, but since all transcendent, all true and genuine greatness must be of a man's own raising and only on the foundation that the hand of God has laid, do not let my touch it keep them off civilly, but keep them off Affect no stoicism, display no indifference let the coin pass current but do not you exchange for it the purer ore you carry, nor think the milling pays for the alloy Greatly favored and blessed by Providence will you be, if you should in your lifetime be known for what you are the contrary, if you should be transformed

Newton Better and more decorous would it be perhaps if I filled up your pause with my reflections but you always have permitted me to ask you questions and now, unless my gratitude misleads me you invite it

Barrow Ask me any thing I will answer it, if I can and I will pardon you, as I have often done, if you puzzle me

Newton Is it not a difficult and a painful thing to repulse, or to receive ungraciously the advances of friendship?

Barrow It withers the heart if indeed his heart were ever sound who doth it Love, serve, run into danger venture life for him who would cherish you give him every thing but your time and your glory Morning recreations convivial meals, evening walks thoughts questions, wishes wants partake with him Yes, Isaac! there are men born for friendship, men to whom the cultivation of it is nature is necessity, as the making of honey is to bees Do not let them suffer for the sweets they would gather, but do not think to live upon those sweets Our corrupted state requires robuster food, or must grow more and more unsound

Newton I would yet say something a few words on this subject—or one next to it

Barrow *On Expense* then that is the next I have given you some warning about it and hardly know what else to say Cannot you find the place?

Newton I had it under my hand If—that is, provided—your time, sir!—

Barrow Speak it out, man! Are you in a ship of Marcellus under the mirror of Archimedes that you fume and redden so?

Cry to him that you are his scholar, and went out only to parley

Newton Sir! in a word—ought a studious man to think of matrimony?

Barrow Painters poets mathematicians never ought other studious men after reflecting for twenty years upon it may Had I a son of your age, I would not leave him in a grazing country Many a man hath been safe among cornfields who falls a victim on the grass under an elm There are lightnings very fatal in such places

Newton Supposing me no mathematician I must reflect then for twenty years!

Barrow Begin to reflect on it after the twenty and continue to reflect on it all the remainder I mean at intervals and quite leisurely It will save to you many prayers and may suggest to you one thanksgiving

XVI WALTON COTTON, AND OLDWAYS[1]

Walton God be with thee and preserve thee, old Ashbourne! Thou art verily the pleasantest place upon his earth I mean from May-day till Michaelmas Son Cotton let us tarry a little here upon the bridge Did you ever see greener meadows than these on either hand? And what says that fine lofty spire upon the left a trowling line as cast from us It says methinks 'Blessed be the Lord for this bounty' come hither and repeat it beside me How my pride winces! I wish the strawberry-spotted trout, and ash colored grayling under us had the bree that plagues thee so my merry wench! Look my son at the great venerable house opposite You know these parts as well as

[1 The character of Mr Oldways in this Conversation is imaginary or rather his association with Walton and Cotton is See note on p 165 The poem attributed to Donne are of course from Landor own pen and Margaret Hayes is equally a creature of fancy The facts of Donne's life are taken from Walton's life The reader of Charle Cotton's poems may find it hard to believe that he was as ingenuous a youth as Landor paints him (Imag Convers v 1829 Works i 1846 Works iv 1876)]

I do or better, are you acquainted with the worthy who lives over there?

Cotton I cannot say I am

Walton You shall be then He has resided here forty five years and knew intimately our good Doctor Donne and (I hear) hath some of his verses written when he was a stripling or little better, the which we come after

Cotton That, I imagine, must be he!—the man in black, walking above the house

Walton Truly said on both counts. Willy Oldways sure enough and he doth walk above his house-top The gardens here you observe overhang the streets

Cotton Ashbourne, to my mind is the prettiest town in England

Walton And there is nowhere between Trent and Tweed a sweeter stream for the trout, I do assure you, than the one our horses are bestriding Those in my opinion, were very wise men who consecrated certain streams to the Muses I know not whether I can say so much of those who added the mountains Whenever I am beside a river or rivulet on a sunny day and think a little while and let images warm into life about me, and joyous sounds increase and multiply in their innocence the sun looks brighter and feels warmer, and I am readier to live, and less unready to die

Son Cotton! these light idle brooks,
Peeping into so many nooks
Yet have not for their idlest wave
The leisure you may think they have
No not the little ones that run
And hide behind the first big stone
When they have squirted in the eye
Of their next neighbor passing by
Nor yonder curly sideling fellow
Of tones than Pan's own flute more mellow
Who learn his tune and tries it over
As girl who fain would please her lover
Something has each of them to say,
He says it and then runs away
And says it in another place
Continuing the unthrifty chase

[[3] First ed reads am tho he visits my relatives when he rides so far "]

We have as many tales to tell
And look as gay and run as well
But have another to pursue
What we had promised we would do
Fill in the order God has fat
One after one precipitated
Whether we *Id* on or would *ot* on
Just like these idle waves son Cotton!

And now I have taken you by surprise I will have (finished or unfinished) the verses you snatched out of my hand and promised me another time when you awoke this morning

Cotton If you must have them here they are

Walton (*reads*)

Rocks under Okeover park paling
Better than Ashbourne suit the grayling
Reckless of people pining the trout
Tossing his vacant head about
And I in distinction tar as one
Not to be touched but looked upon
And marks a kane as who should say
I dly unwilling *I'd* lay)
The brighter fly that hines above
You know not what *I'm* thinking of
What *you* are I am plainly tell
And so my gentle fare ye well!

Heigh! heigh! what have we here?—a[4] double hook with a bait upon each side Faith! son Cotton if my friend Oldways had seen these,—not the verses I have been reading but these others I have run over in silence —he would have reproved me in his mild amicable way for my friendship with one who at two and twenty could either know so much or invent so much about a girl He remarked to me, the last time we met, that our climate was more backward and our youth more forward than anciently and taking out a newspaper from under the cushion of his arm chair, showed me a paragraph, with a cross in red ink and seven or eight marks of admiration,—some on one side some on the other —in which there was mention made of a female servant,

[3 From It to (*adi*) (2 lines) added in 2nd ed]
[4 From a to "side added in 2nd ed One line below from not to "silence (2 lines) added in 2nd ed]

who, hardly seventeen years old, charged her master's son who was barely two older —

Cotton Nonsense! nonsense! impossible!

Walton Why he himself seemed to express a doubt for beneath was written Qu if perjured—which God forbid! May all turn out to his glory!

Cotton But really I do not recollect that paper of mine, if mine it be, which appears to have stuck against the Okeover paling lines

Walton Look! they are both on the same scrap Truly, son, there are girls here and there who might have said as much as thou their proctor hast indicted for them they have such froward tongues in their heads some of them A breath keeps them in motion like a Jew's harp God knows how long If you do not or will not recollect the verses on this endorsement, I will read them again and aloud.

Cotton Pray do not balk your fancy

Walton (*reads*)

> Where[6] is my apron? I will gather
> Daffodils and king up rath r
> Than have fifty silly soul
> False as cat and dull as owls
> Looking up into my eye
> And half blinding me with sighs

Cats, forsooth! *Owls* and cry you mercy! Have[7] they no better words than those for civil people? Did any young woman really use the expressions, bating the metre or can you have contrived them out of pure likelihood?

Cotton I will not gratify your curiosity at present

[5 From which to lines and look to scrap added in 2nd ed Two lines below from as thou to them add d in 2nd ed One line below from God to (*read*) (5 lines) added in 2nd ed]

[6 First ed reads

> In my bo om I would rather
> Daffodils and kingcups gather
> Than have fifty sighing soul
> False as cats and dull as owls "

Last couplet added in 2nd ed]

[7 From Have to then ' (5 lines) added in 2nd ed]

Walton Anon, then

Here I tretch myself along
I ell a tale or sing a ong
By my cousin Sue or Bet—
And for dinn r here I get
Strawberries curd or what I please
With my bread upon my kn es
And when I have had enough
Sl ake and off to *bl nd ma b ff*[8]

Spoken in the chai icter of a maiden, it seems who little knows in her innocence, that *blind man s buff* is a perilous game

[[8] First ed adds the following four lines

Which I cannot do if they
Ever come a ro my way
They so puzzle me! that tongue
Alw ys make one cry out wrong!

A note is appended to these verse in the 1st ed whose application it is son ewhat hard to di cover

I cannot but think that I am indebted to a beautiful little poem of Redi f r the train of these ideas though without a consciousn s of it while I wa writ ng His onnets are am ng the worst in the language there is but ne xception I am likely to be a bad translator and moreover I mu t inform the reader that I am de ignedly an unfaithful one in the cond line of which the lit ral and entire version i who pas thro *P ty t t* I have taken the elegiac measure as more b oming the subject

Ye gentle souls ye tenderer of the fair
Who passing by to l ity s voice incline
O stay a while an l hear me l then declar
If there was e er grief that equal l mine

There was a woman to whose hallowe l breast
Faith had retired and Honour fixed his throne—
Pride tho upheld by Virtue he repres ed
Ye gentle souls *that* woman was my own

Her form was fi l d with beauty from her face
Grace was in all she did in all she said
Grace in her pleasures in her sorrows grace—
Ye gentle soul *th t* gentle soul is fled!

From spoken to church (4 lines) added in 2nd ed First ed reads In the church to our right lie the Cockayne Whole &c]

You are looking I perceive, from off the streamlet toward the church In its chancel lie the first and last of the Cockaynes Whole races of men have been exterminated by war and pestilence families and names have slipped down and lost themselves by slow and imperceptible decay but I doubt whether any breed of fish with heron and otter and angler in pursuit of it hath been extinguished since the Heptarchy They might humble our pride a whit methinks, though they hold their tongues The people here entertain a strange prejudice against the *nine eyes*

Cotton What in the name of wonder is that?

Walton At your years do not you know? It is a tiny kind of lamprey a finger long it sticketh to the stones by its sucker and if you are not warier and more knowing than folks in general from the South you might take it for a weed it wriggles its whole body to and fro so regularly and is of that dark color which subaqueous weeds are often of, as though they were wet through which they are not any more than land weeds if one may believe young Doctor Plott who told me so in confidence

Hold my mare son Cotton I will try whether my whip can reach the window when I have mounted the bank

Cotton Curious! the middle of a street to be lower than the side by several feet People would not believe it in London or Hull

Walton Ho! lass! tell the good parson your master or his wife if she be nearer at hand that two friends would dine with him Charles Cotton kinsman of Mistress Cotton of the Peak and his humble servant Izaak Walton

Girl If you are come gentles to dine with my master I will make another kidney pudding first while I am about it and then tell him not but we have enough and to spare, yet master and mistress love to see plenty, and to welcome with no such peacods as words

Walton Go thou hearty jade trip it and tell him

Cotton I will answer for it, thy friend is a good soul [9] I perceive it in the heartiness and alacrity of the wench She glories in his hospitality, and it renders her labor a delight

[9 First ed reads soul although I know but little of him and have not met him for years *Walt* He want &c]

Walton He wants nothing yet he keeps the grammar-school and is ready to receive as private tutor any young gentleman in preparation for Oxford or Cambridge but only one They live like princes, converse like friends, and part like lovers *

Cotton Here he comes I never saw such a profusion of snow white hair

Walton Let us go up and meet him

Oldways Welcome my friends! will you walk back into the house or sit awhile in the shade here?

Walton We will sit down in the grass, on each side of your arm chair, good master William Why how is this? here are tulips and other flowers by the thousand growing out of the turf You are all of a piece my sunny aunt you are always concealing the best things about you except your counsel your raisin-wine and your money

Oldways The garden was once divided by borders A young gentleman my private pupil was fond of leaping his heels ruined my choicest flowers ten or twenty at a time I remonstrated he patted me on the shoulder and said My dear Mr Oldways in these borders if you miss a flower you are uneasy now if the whole garden were in turf you would be delighted to discover one Turf it then and leave the flowers to grow or not to grow as may happen I mentioned it to my wife 'Suppose we do' said she It was done and the boy's remark I have found by experience is true

Walton You have some very nice flies about the trees here, friend Oldways Charles, do prythee lay thy hand upon that green one He has it! he has it! bravely done upon my life! I never saw any thing achieved so admirably—not a wing nor an antenna the worse for it Put him into this box. Thou art caught, but shalt catch other lie softly

I pay the tribute to my worthy old tutor Mr Langley of Ashbourne under whose tuition I passed a year between Rugby and Oxford He would take only one private pupil and never had but me The kindness of him and his wife to me was parental They died nearly together about five and twenty years ago Never was a youth blest with three such indulgent and affectionate private tutors as I was before by the elegant and generous Doctor John Sleath at Rugby and after by the saintly Benwell at Oxford —W S L

Cotton The transport of Dad Walton will carry him off (I would lay a wager) from the object of his ride

Oldways What was that sir?

Cotton Old Donne I suspect is nothing to such a fly

Walton All things in their season

Cotton Come, I carried the rods in my hand all the way

Oldways I never could have believed Master Izaak that you would have trusted your tackle out of your own hand

Walton Without cogent reason no indeed but—let me whisper

I told youngster it was because I carried a hunting-whip and could not hold that and rod too But why did I carry it bethink you?

Oldways I cannot guess

Walton I must come behind your chair and whisper softlier I have that in my pocket which might make the dogs inquisitive and troublesome—a rare paste, of my own invention When son Cotton sees me draw up gill after gill and he can do nothing he will respect me,—not that I have to complain of him as yet,—and he shall know the whole at supper after[10] the first day's sport

Cotton Have you asked?

Walton Anon have patience

Cotton Will no reminding do? Not a rod or line or fly of any color false or true shall you have Dad Izaak before you have made to our kind host here your intended application

Oldways No ceremony with me I desire Speak, and have

Walton Oldways, I think you were curate to Master Donne?

Oldways When I was first in holy orders and[11] he was ready for another world

Walton I have heard it reported that you have some of his earlier poetry

Oldways I have (I believe) a trifle or two but, if he were living, he would not wish them to see the light

[10 From 'after to sport added in 2nd ed
[11 From and to world added in 2nd ed

Walton Why not?—he had nothing to fear his fame was established and he was a discreet and holy man

Oldways He was almost in his boyhood when he wrote it being but in his twenty-third year and subject to fits of love

Cotton This passion then cannot have had for its object the daughter of Sir George More, whom he saw not until afterward

Oldways No nor was that worthy lady called Margaret as was this who scattered so many pearls in his path he was wont to say that he trod uneasily on them and could never skip them

Walton Let us look at them in his poetry

Oldways I know not whether he would consent thereto were he living the lines running so totally on the amorous

Walton Faith and troth! we mortals are odd fishes We care not how many see us in choler when we rave and bluster and make as much noise and bustle as we can but if the kindest and most generous affection comes across us we suppress every sign of it and hide ourselves in nooks and coverts Out with the drawer, my dear Oldways we have seen Donne's sting in justice to him, let us now have a sample of his honey

Oldways Strange that you never asked me before

Walton I am fain to write his life now one can sit by Dove-side and hold the paper upon one's knee without fear that some unlucky catchpole of a rheumatism tip one upon the shoulder I have many things to say in Donne's favor let me add to them, by your assistance that he not only loved well and truly as was proved in his marriage—though like a good angler he changed his fly and did not at all seasons cast his rod over the same water—but that his heart opened early to the genial affections that his satire was only the overflowing of his wit that he made it administer to his duties that he ordered it to officiate as he would his curate, and perform half the service of the church for him

Cotton Pray who was the object of his affections?

Oldways The damsel was Mistress Margaret Hayes

Cotton I am curious to know, if you will indulge my curiosity what figure of a woman she might be

Oldways She was of lofty stature, red haired (which some folks dislike), but with comely white eyebrows a very slender transparent[1] nose, and elegantly thin lips, covering with due astringency a treasure of pearls beyond price which as her lover would have it she never ostentatiously displayed Her chin was somewhat long with what I should have simply called a sweet dimple in it quite proportionate but Donne said it was more than dimple that it was peculiar that her angelic face could not have existed without it nor it without her angelic face —that is, unless by a new dispensation He was much taken thereby and mused upon it deeply calling it in moments of joyousness the cradle of all sweet fancies and, in hours of suffering from her sedateness the vale of death

Walton So ingenious are men when the spring torrent of passion shakes up and carries away their thoughts covering (as it were) the green meadow of still homely life with pebbles and shingle,—some colorless and obtuse some sharp and sparkling

Cotton I hope he was happy in her at last

Oldways Ha![13] ha! here we have em Strong lines! Happy, no, he was not happy He was forced to renounce her by what he then called his evil destiny and wishing if not to forget her, yet to assuage his grief under the impediments to their union, he made a voyage to Spain and the Azores with the Earl of Essex When this passion first blazed out he was in his twentieth year for the physicians do tell us that where the genius is ardent the passions are precocious The lady had profited by many more seasons than he had and carried with her manifestly the fruits of circumspection No benefice falling unto him, nor indeed there being fit preparation she submitted to the will of Providence Howbeit he could not bring his mind to reason until ten years after when he married the daughter of the worshipful Sir George More

Cotton I do not know whether the arduous step of matrimony, on which many a poor fellow has broken his shins is a step geometrically calculated for bringing us to reason, but

[12 First ed reads ' very slender nose and thin lips Her ch &c]
[13 From Ha! ' to obtrusively (30 lines) added in 2nd ed]

I have seen passion run up it in a minute and down it in half a one

Oldways Young gentleman! my patron the doctor was none of the light hearted and oblivious

Cotton Truly I should think it a hard matter to forget such a beauty as his muse and his chaplain have described at least if one had ever stood upon the brink of matrimony with her It is allowable I hope to be curious concerning the termination of so singular an attachment

Oldways She would listen to none other

Cotton Surely she must have had good ears to have heard one

Oldways No pretender had the hardihood to come forward too obtrusively Donne had the misfortune as he then thought it to outlive her after a courtship of about five years which enabled him to contemplate her ripening beauties at leisure and to bend over the opening flowers of her virtues and accomplishments Alas! they were lost to the world (unless by example) in her forty seventh spring

Cotton He might then leisurely bend over them and quite as easily have the seed out as smell them Did she refuse him then?

Oldways He dared not ask her

Cotton Why verily I should have boggled at that and walk (I think myself

Oldways Izaak! our young friend Master Cotton is not sedate enough yet I suspect for right view and perception of poetry I doubt whether these affecting verses on her loss will move him greatly somewhat yes there is in the beginning so much simplicity in the middle so much reflection in the close so much grandeur and sublimity no scholar can peruse them without strong emotion Take and read them

Cotton Nay come do not keep them to yourself dad! I have the heart of a man and will bear the recitation as valiantly as may be

Walton I read aloud the best stanza only What strong language

> Her one hair would hold a dragon
> Her one eye would burn an earth
> Fall my tears! fill each your flagon!
> Millions fall! A dearth! a dearth!

Cotton The doctor must have been desperate about the fair Margaret

Walton His verses are fine, indeed one feels for him, poor man!

Cotton And wishes him nearer to Stourbridge or some other glass-furnace He must have been at great charges

Oldways Lord help the youth! Tell him Izaak, *that* is poetical and means nothing

Walton He has an inkling of it, I misgive me

Cotton How could he write so smoothly in his affliction when he exhibited nothing of the same knack afterward

Walton I don't know unless it may be that men's verses, like their knees stiffen by age [14]

Oldways I do like vastly your glib verses but you cannot be at once easy and majestical

Walton It is only our noble rivers that enjoy this privilege The greatest conqueror in the world never had so many triumphal arches erected to him as our middlesized brooks have

Oldways Now Master Izaak by your leave I do think you are wrong in calling them triumphal The ancients would have it that arches over waters were signs of subjection

Walton The ancients may have what they will excepting your good company for the evening which (please God!) we shall keep to ourselves They were mighty people for subjection and subjugation

Oldways Virgil says "Pontem indignatus Araxes

Walton Araxes was testy enough under it I dare to aver But what have you to say about the matter son Cotton?

Cotton I dare not decide either against my father or mine host.

Oldways So, we are yet no friends

Cotton Under favor, then I would say that we but acknowledge the power of rivers and runlets in bridging them for without so doing we could not pass We are obliged to offer them a crown or diadem as the price of their acquiescence

Oldways Rather do I think that we are feudatory to them much in the same manner as the dukes of Normandy were to the

[14 First ed reads age *Cott n* One would wish the stiffness somewhere else *Oldway* Ay truly I do like &c]

kings of France pulling them out of their beds, or making them lie narrowly and uneasily therein

Walton Is that between thy fingers, Will, another piece of honest old Donne's poetry?

Oldways Yes these and one other are the only pieces I have kept for we often throw away or neglect in the lifetime of our friends those things which in some following age are searched after through all the libraries in the world What[15] I am about to read he composed in the meridian heat of youth and genius

> She was so beautiful had God but died
> For her and none beside
> Reigning with holy joy from east to west
> Earth would have sunk down blest
> And returning with bright zeal the buoyant Sun
> Cried through his world *World!*

He must have had an eye on the Psalmist for I would not asseverate that he was inspired Master Walton in the theological sense of the word but I do verily believe I discover here a thread of the mantle

Cotton And with enough of the nap on it to keep him hot as a muffin when one slips the butter in

Oldways True Nobody would dare to speak thus but from authority The Greeks and Romans he remarked had neat baskets but scanty simples and did not press them down so closely as they might have done and were fonder of nosegays than of sweet pots He told me the rose of Paphos was of one species the rose of Sharon of another Wherein he burst forth to the purpose,—

> "Rather give me the lasting rose of Sharon
> But dipt in the oil that oiled thy beard O Aaron!

Nevertheless I could perceive that he was of so equal a mind that he liked them equally in their due season These majestical verses—

Cotton I am anxious to hear the last of em

Oldways No wonder and I will joyfully gratify so laudable a wish He wrote this among the earliest —

> Juno was proud Minerva stern
> Venus would rather toy than learn
> What fault is there in Margaret Hayes?
> Her high disdain and pointed stay

[15 From What to wish (28 lines) added in 2nd ed.]

I do not know whether it being near our dinner time I ought to enter so deeply as I could into a criticism on it which the doctor himself in a single evening, taught me how to do Chaucer is rather of the youngest but I will be circumspect That Juno was proud may be learned from Virgil The following passages in him and other Latin poets—

Cotton We will examine them all after dinner, my dear sir

Oldways The nights are not mighty long, but we shall find time I trust

Minerva stern

Excuse me a moment my Homer is in the study and my memory is less exact than it was formerly

Cotton Oh, my good Mr Oldways! do not let us lose a single moment of your precious company Doctor Donne could require no support from these heathens when he had the dean and chapter on his side

Oldways A few parallel passages — One would wish to write as other people have written

Cotton We must sleep at Uttoxeter

Oldways I hope not.

Walton We must indeed and if we once get into your learning, we shall be carried down the stream without the power even of wishing to mount it

Oldways Well I will draw in then

Venus would rather toy than learn

Now Master Izaak, does that evince a knowledge of the world, a knowledge of men and manners or not? In our days we have nothing like it exquisite wisdom! Reason and meditate as you ride along and inform our young friend here how the beautiful trust in their beauty, and how little they learn from experience, and how they trifle and toy Certainly the Venus here is Venus Urania the Doctor would dissertate upon none other, yet even she, being a Venus—the sex is the sex—ay, Izaak!

Her high disdain and pointed stays

Volumes and volumes are under these words Briefly, he could

find no other faults in his beloved than the defences of her virgin chastity against his marital and portly ardor What can be more delicately or more learnedly expressed!

Walton This is the poetry to reason upon from morning to night.

Cotton By my conscience is it! He wrongs it greatly who ventures to talk a word about it unless after long reflection or after the instruction of the profound author

Oldways Izaak thou hast a son worthy of thee or about to become so—the son here of thy adoption—how grave and thoughtful!

Walton These verses are testimonials of a fine fancy in Donne and I like the man the better who admits love into his study late and early for which two reasons I seized the lines at first with some avidity On second thoughts however I doubt whether I shall insert them in my biography or indeed hint at the origin of them In the whole story of his marriage with the daughter of Sir George More there is something so sacredly romantic so full of that which bursts from the tenderest heart and from the purest that I would admit no other light or landscape to the portraiture For if there is aught precedent or subsequent, that offends our view of an admirable character or intercepts or lessens it, we may surely cast it down and suppress it, and neither be called an injudicious nor disingenuous I think it no more requisite to note every fit of anger or of love than to chronicle the returns of a hiccup or the times a man rubs between his fingers a sprig of sweet briar to extract its smell Let the character be taken in the complex and let the more obvious and best peculiarities be marked plainly and distinctly or (if those predominate) the worst These latter I leave to others of whom the school is full who like anatomy the better because the subject of their incisions was hanged When I would sit upon a bank in my angling I look for the even turf and do not trust myself so willingly to a rotten stump or a sharp one I am not among those who speaking ill of the virtuous, say 'Truth obliges me to confess—the interests of learning and of society demand from me— and such things when this truth of theirs is the elder sister of malevolence and teaches her half her tricks, and when the interests of learning and of society may be found in

the printer's ledger under the author's name by the aide of shillings and pennies

Oldways Friend Izaak you are indeed exempt from all suspicion of malignity and I never heard you intimate that you carry in your pocket the *letters patent* of society for the management of her interests in this world below Verily do I believe that both society and learning will pardon you though you never talk of *pursuing* or *exposing* or *laying bare* or *cutting up* or employ any other term in their behalf drawn from the woods and forests, the chase and butchery Donne fell into unhappiness by aiming at espousals with a person of higher condition than himself

Walton His affections happened to alight upon one who was and in most cases I would recommend it rather than the contrary, for the advantage of the children in their manners and in their professions

Light and worthless men, I have always observed choose the society of those who are either much above or much below them and like dust and loose feathers are rarely to be found in their places Donne was none such he loved his equals and would find them where he could when he could not find them, he could sit alone This seems an easy matter and yet masters there are more people who could run along a rope from yonder spire to this grass plot than can do it

Oldways Come gentles the girl raps at the garden-gate I hear the ladle against the lock dinner waits for us

XVII MACHIAVELLI AND MICHEL-ANGELO BUONARROTI [1]

Michel-Angelo And how do you like my fortifications Messer Niccolo?

[1] For the details of the history of Florence at the date of this Conversation see Villari's Life and Times of Machiavelli vol iv chapter xiv seq Only a short sketch can be given here Clement VII one of the Medici family was at this time pope and the Medici were in power at Florence Charles V was on the point of sending into Italy the ex

Machiavelli It will easily be taken Messer Michel Angelo because there are other points—Bello squardo for instance and the Poggio above Boboli—whence every street and edifice may be cannonaded

Michel Angelo Surely you do not argue with your wonted precision my good friend Because the enemy may occupy those positions and cannonade the city is that a reason why our fort of Samminiato should so easily be surrendered?

Machiavelli There was indeed a time when such an argument would have been futile but that time was when Florence was ruled by only her own citizens and when the two factions that devoured her started up with equal alacrity from their prey, and fastened on the invader But, it being known to Charles that we have neglected to lay in provisions more than sufficient for one year he will allow our courageous citizens to pelt and scratch and bite his men occasionally for that short time after which they must surrender This policy will leave to him the houses and furniture in good condition and whatsoever fines and taxes may be imposed will be paid the more easily while the Florentines will be able to boast of their courage and perseverance the French of their patience and clemency It will be a good example for other people to follow and many historians will praise both parties all will praise one

I have given my answer to your question and I now approve and applaud the skill and solidity with which you construct the works regretting only that we have neither time to erect the others that are necessary nor to enroll the countrymen who are equally so for their defence Charles is a prudent and a patient conqueror, and he knows the temper and the power of each

pedition which succeeded in sacking Rome capturing Florence and making him master of the whole country Machiavelli was in the employment of the Medici in Florence and was appointed chancellor of the curators for the fortification of the city But before he could make any progress with the work the German army had captured Rome and a revolution in Florence had expelled the Medici Machiavelli at this time was absent from Florence and on his return he found a new government who regarded him as an adherent of the Medici and refused to employ him A few days after this disappointment he fell ill and died Michel Angelo had already been entrusted with the construction of the fortifications but it will be seen that no such Conversation can ever have taken place (Works II 1846 Works IV, 1876)]

adversary He will not demolish nor greatly hurt the city What he cannot effect by terror, he will effect by time —that miner whom none can countermine We have brave men among our citizens —men sensible of shame and ignominy in enduring the dictation of a stranger or the domination of an equal but we have not many of these nor have they any weight in our councils The rest are far different and altogether dissimilar to their ancestors They whatever was their action contended for liberty for domestic ties for personal honour, for public approbation we, for pictures, for statues bronze tripods and tessellated tables these and the transient smiles of dukes and cardinals are deemed of higher value than our heirloom —worm-eaten creaking crazy freedom

Michel Angelo I never thought them so and yet somewhat of parental love may be supposed to influence me in favour of the fairer solider and sounder portion of the things you set before me

Machiavelli It is a misfortune to possess what can be retained by servility alone and the more precious the possession the greater is the misfortune

Michel Angelo Dukes and cardinals popes and emperors cannot take away from me the mind and spirit that God has placed immeasurably high above them If men are become so vile and heartless as to sit down quietly and see pincers and pulleys tear the sinews of their best benefactors they are not worth the stones and sand we have been piling up for their protection

Machiavelli To rail is indecorous, to reason is idle and troublesome When you seriously intend to lead people back again to their senses, do not call any man wiser or better than the rabble for this affronts all and the bad and strong the most But tell them calmly that the chief difference between the government of a republic and a dukedom is this —in a republic there are more deaths by day than by night in a dukedom, the contrary that perhaps we see as many taken to prison in a republic certainly we see more come out

Michel-Angelo If any man of reflection needs to be shown the futility and mischief of hereditary power, we Florentines surely may show it to him in the freshest and most striking of examples Lorenzo de Medici united a greater number of high and amiable

qualities than any other man among his contemporaries and yet Lorenzo lived in an age which must ever be reckoned most fertile in men of genius and energy His heart was open to the poor and afflicted his house, his library, his very baths and bed rooms to the philosopher and the poet What days of my youth have I spent in his society! Even after he was at the head of the commonwealth he had society for even then he had fellow citizens What lessons has he himself given me in every thing relating to my studies!—in mythology in architecture in sculpture in painting in every branch and ramification of eloquence! Can I ever forget the hour when he led me by the arm in the heat of the day to the eastern[2] door of our baptistery and said, Michel Angelo this is the only wonder of the world! It rose like the world itself out of nothing Its great maker was without an archetype he drew from the inherent beauty of his soul Venerate here its image It was then I said It is worthy to be the gate of Paradise and he replied The garden is walled up let us open a space for the portal He did it as far as human ability could do it and if afterward he took a station which belonged not of right to him he took it lest it should be occupied by worse and weaker men His son succeeded to him what a son! The father thought and told me that no materials were durable enough for my works Perhaps he erred but how did Piero correct the error? He employed me in making statues of snow in the gardens of Boboli statues the emblems at once of his genius and his authority

Machiavelli How little foresight have the very wisest of those who invade the liberties of their country!—how little true love for their children!—how little foresight for their descendants in whose interest they believe they labor! There neither is nor ought to be any safety for those who clap upon our shoulders their heavy pampered children and make us carry them whether we will or not Lorenzo was well versed in history could he for

[The church of San Giovanni has three gates two of which are designed by Ghiberti The one called by Michel Angelo the Gate of Paradise is the northern gate in which alone Ghiberti was allowed to follow his own genius The east rn gate was also constructed by him but he was required to make it after the manner of the southern gate which had been designed by Giotto]

get, or could he overlook, the dreadful punishments that are the certain inheritance of whoever reaps the harvest of such misdeeds? How many sanguinary deaths by the avenging arm of violated law!—how many assassinations from the people!—how many poisonings and stabbings from domestics from guards, from kindred!—fratricides, parricides and that horrible crime for which no language has formed a name—the bloodshed of the son by the parental hand! A citizen may perhaps be happier for the moment, by so bold and vast a seizure as a principality but his successor, born to the possession of supremacy can enjoy nothing of this satisfaction For him there is neither the charm of novelty nor the excitement of action, nor is there the glory of achievement no mazes of perplexing difficulty gone safely through, no summit of hope attained But there is perpetually the same fear of losing the acquisition the same suspicion of friends the same certainty of enemies the same number of virtues shut out and of vices shut in by his condition This is the end obtained which is usually thought better than the means And what are the means than which this end is better! They are such as we might imagine, no man who had ever spent a happy hour with his equals would employ, even if his family were as sure of advantage by employing them as we have shown that it is sure of detriment In order that a citizen may become a prince, the weaker are seduced and the wiser are corrupted for wisdom on this earth is earthly and stands not above the elements of corruption His successor finding less tractability works with harder and sharper instruments The revels are over the dream is broken men rise, bestir themselves, and are tied down Their confessors and wives console them saying, 'You would not have been tied down had you been quiet. The son is warned not to run into the error of his father, by this clear demonstration "Yonder villa was his, with the farms about it, he sold it and them to pay the fine

Michel Angelo And are these the doctrines our children must be taught? I will have none then I will avoid the marriage-bed as I would the bed of Procrustes. Oh that, by any exertion of my art, I could turn the eyes of my countrymen toward Greece! I wish to excel in painting or in sculpture, partly for my glory, partly for my sustenance, being poor but

greatly more to arouse in their breasts the recollection of what was higher Then come the questions Whence was it?—how was it? Surely, too surely, not by Austrians French and Spaniards—all equally barbarous though the Spaniards were in contiguity with the Moors and one sword polished the other

Machiavelli The only choice left us was the choice of our enslaver we have now lost even that Our wealthier citizens make up their old shopkeeping bills into marquis caps and tranquilly fall asleep under so soft a coverture Represent to them what their grandfathers were and they shake the head with this furred foolery upon it, telling us it is time for the world to go to rest They preach to us from their new cushions on the sorrowful state of effervescence in our former popular government and the repose and security to be enjoyed under hereditary princes chosen from among themselves

Michel Angelo Chosen by whom? and from what?—*ourselves*? Well might one of such creatures cry as Atys did if like Atys he could recover his senses under a worse and more shameful eviration —

> Ego non quod habuerim
> Ego Mænis ego non pars go ir teritis ero
> Jam jam dolet quod egi

Yes indeed there was all his effervescence Men spoke loud men would have their own, although they might have blows with it And is it a matter of joyance to those wise and sober personages that the government which reared and nurtured them to all their wisdom and sobriety and much other more erect and substantial should be now extinct? Rivers run on and pass away pools and morasses are at rest for ever But shall I build my house upon the pool or the morass because it lies so still?—or shall I abstain from my recreation by the river side because the stream runs on? Whatever you have objected to republicanism may, in its substance a little modified be objected to royalty, great and small, principalities and dukedoms In republics, high and tranquil minds are liable to neglect, and, what is worse, to molestation but those who molest them are usually grave men or acute ones and act openly, with fair formalities and professed respect On the contrary, in

such governments as ours was recently, a young commissary of police orders you to appear before him asks you first whether you know why he called you, and then turning over his papers at his leisure puts to you as many other idle questions as come into his head, demands you calls you back at the door gives you a long admonition partly by order (he tells you) of his superiors, partly his own bids you to be more circumspect in future and to await the further discretion of his Excellency the President of the *Buon Governo* O Messer Niccolo! surely the rack[3] you suffered is more tolerable, not merely than the experience but even than the possibility, of such arrogance and insult

Machiavelli Cæsar's head was placed on the neck of the world, and was large enough for it but our necks Messer Michel-Angelo are grasped wrung and contracted for the heads of geese to surmount them It was not the kick it was the ass, that made the sick lion roar and die Either the state of things which you have been describing is very near its termination, or people are growing low enough to accommodate themselves to their abject fortunes Some fishes once of the ocean lost irretrievably by following up a contracted and tortuous channel, their pristine form and nature, and became of a size and quality for dead or shallow waters which narrow and weedy and slimy banks confine There are stages in the manners of principalities as there are in human life Princes at first are kind and affable, their successors are condescending and reserved the next indifferent and distant the last, repulsive, insolent and ferocious, or, what is equally fatal to arbitrary power voluptuous and slothful The cruel have many sympathizers, the selfish, few These wretches bear heavily on the lower classes, and usually fall as they are signing an edict of famine or protecting a favorite who enforces it By one or other of these diseases dies arbitrary power, and much and various purification is necessary to render the chamber where it has lain salubrious. Democracies may be longer-lived, although they have enemies in most of the rich in more of the timorous, and nearly in all the wise The former will pamper them to feed upon them the latter will kiss them

[3 Machiavelli was suspected of complicity in the conspiracy of Boscoli and Capponi against the Medici See Villari vol iii p 169]

to betray them the intermediate will slink off and wish them well Those governments alone can be stable or are worthy of being so in which property and intellect keep the machine in right order and regular operation each being conscious that it is the natural ally and reciprocal protector of the other that nothing ought to be above them and that what is below them ought to be as little below as possible otherwise it never can consistently steadily and effectually support them None of these considerations seem to have been ever entertained by men who with more circumspection and prudence might have effected the regeneration of Italy The changes they wished to bring about were entirely for their own personal aggrandizement Cæsar Borgia and Julius the Second would have expelled all strangers from interference in our concerns But the former although intelligent and acute having a mind less capacious than his ambition and the latter more ambition than any mind without more instruments could manage and neither of them the wish or the thought of employing the only means suitable to the end —their vast loose projects crumbled under them

Michel Angelo Your opinion of Borgia is somewhat high and I fancied you did not despise Pope Julius

Machiavelli Some of you artists ought to regard him with gratitude but you yourself must despise the frivolous dotard who, while he should have been meditating and accomplishing the deliverance of Italy —which *he* could have done and *he* only —was running after you, and breathing at one time caresses, at another time menaces, to bring you back into the Vatican, after your affront and flight. Instead of this grand work of liberation (at least from barbarians) what was he planning? His whole anxiety was about his mausoleum! Now, certainly, Messer Michel-Angelo the more costly a man's monument is the more manifest if he himself orders the erection must be his consciousness that there is much in him which he would wish to be covered over by it, and much which never was his and which he is desirous of appropriating But no monument is a bed capacious enough for his froward and restless imbecilities and any that is magnificent only shows one the more of them

Michel Angelo He who deserves a mausoleum is not desirous

even of a grave stone He knows his mother earth he frets for no fine cradle but lies tranquilly and composed at her feet The pen will rise above the pyramid but those who would build the pyramid would depress the pen Julius had as little love of true glory as of civil liberty, which never ruler more pertinaciously suppressed His only passion if we may call it one, was vanity Cæsar Borgia had penetration and singleness of aim —the great constituents of a great man His birth which raised him many favorers in his ascent to power raised him more enemies in his highest elevation He had a greater number of friends than he could create of fortunes and bees when no hive is vacant carry their honey elsewhere

Machiavelli Borgia[4] was cruel both by necessity and by nature now, no cruel prince can be quite cruel enough When he is tired of striking, he falls He who is desirous of becoming a prince should calculate first how many estates can be confiscated Pompey learned and wrote fully out this lesson of arithmetic but Julius Cæsar tore the copy-book from his hand and threw it among those behind him who repeated it in his ear until he gave them the reward of their application

Michel-Angelo He alone was able and willing to reform the State It is well for mankind that human institutions want revisal and repair Our bodies and likewise our minds require both refreshment and motion and unless we attend to the necessities of both imbecility and dissolution soon ensue It was as easy in the Middle Ages, for the towns of Italy to form themselves into republics which many did as it was for the villages of Switzerland and not more difficult to retain their immunities. We are surely as populous we are as well armed we are as strong and active we are as docile to discipline, we are as rich and flourishing we want only their moral courage, their resolute perseverance their public and private virtue their self-respect and mutual confidence These are indeed great and many wants, and have always been ill-supplied since the extinction of the Gracchi

[4 As to the security of a tyrant all depends whether cruelties are well done or ill Those are well done if we may speak so of evil deed which are done suddenly for the sake of establishing a safe position and are not continued afterwards Those are ill done that are long continued" Prince chap viii]

The channel that has been dry so many centuries can only be replenished by a great convulsion Even now if ever we rise again to the dignity of men and citizens it must be from under the shield and behind the broadsword of the Switzers

Machiavelli Thirty thousand of them, whenever France resumes her arms against the empe or might be induced to establish our independence and secure their own by engaging them to oblige the state of Lombardy first, and successively Rome and Naples to contribute a subsidy for a certain number of years, on the overthrow of their infirm and cumbrous governments The beggars the idle and indigent of those nations might beneficially to themselves, be made provisional serfs to our defenders, who on their part would have duties as imperative to perform In the Neapolitan and papal territories there is an immensity of land ill cultivated or not cultivated at all claimed and occupied as the property of the government —enough for all the paupers of Italy to till, and all her defenders to possess Men must use their hands rightly before they can rightly use their reason those usually think well who work well Beside I would take especial care that they never were in want of religion to instruct and comfort them they should enjoy a sprinkling of priests and friars with breviaries and mattocks in the midst of them, and the laborer in good earnest should be worthy of his hire The feudal system, which fools cry out against was supremely wise The truckle bed of valor and freedom is not wadded with floss silk there are gnarls without and knots within and hard is the bolster of these younger Dioscuri Genoa, on receiving the dominion of Piedmont would cede to Tuscany the little she possesses on the south of the Trebbia Venice would retain what she holds Bologna would be the capital of all the country to the eastward of the Apennines, from the Po to the Ofanto Rome, from the sources of the Nar to the mouth of the Liber (which still should be a Tuscan river, excepting what is within the walls), and southward as far as the Vulturnus Naples would be mistress of the rest. These seven republics should send each five deputies yearly, for the first twenty days of March, enjoying the means of living splendidly in the apartments of the Vatican For without a high degree of splendor no magistrate is at all respected in our country, and slightly anywhere else The consul, invested with the

executive power should be elected out of the body of legates on the third day of each annual session he should proceed duly to the hall of deliberation at the Capitol in state the trumpet should sound as he mounts his carriage, drawn by eight horses, and again as he alights no troops should accompany him excepting twelve of the civic guard on each side twelve before and twelve behind on white chargers richly caparisoned and appertaining to the consular establishment

Michel-Angelo I approve of this and I should approve as heartily of any means whatsoever by which it might be effected But it appears to me Messer Niccolo, that the territories of Rome and Bologna although the Bolognese would continue to the whole extent of the Apennines would be less populous than the others

Machiavelli Where is the harm of that? A city may be angry and discontented if she cannot tear away somewhat from her neighbors But in the system I propose all enjoy equal laws and, as it cannot be of the slightest advantage to any town or hamlet to form a portion of a larger State rather than of a smaller, so neither can the smaller State be liable to a disadvantage by any town or hamlet lying out of it Rome has always been well contented to repose on her ancient glory She loses nothing by the chain being snapped that held others to her, for it requires no stretch of thought (if it did I would not ask it of her) to recollect that it held *her* as well as *them* Bologna's territory would begin with Ferrara on the north and terminate with the Mediterranean on the south still, excepting the Roman it would be the least. Her position will not allow her more, and well is it that it will not. For the priesthood has too long made its holes there running underground from Rome, and you know, Messer Michel Angelo, the dairy will smell disagreeably where the rats have burrowed lately

Michel-Angelo True enough Let me now make another remark. Apparently you would allow no greater number of legates from the larger States than from the smaller

Machiavelli A small community has need for even more to protect its interests than a larger He who has a strong body has less occasion for a loud voice, and fewer occasions to cry for

assistance Five legates from each republic are sufficient in number, if they are sufficient in energy and information If they are not, the fault lies with their constituents The more debaters there are the less business will be done, and the fewer inquiries brought to an issue In federal States all having the same obligations and essentially the same form of government, hardly is it possible for any two to quarrel and the interest of the remainder would require and compel if necessary a prompt and a firm reconciliation No State in Europe, desirous of maintaining a character for probity will refuse to another the surrender of a criminal or debtor who has escaped to avoid that other's laws If churches and palaces ought not to be sanctuaries for the protection of crime surely whole kingdoms ought not Our republics by avoiding this iniquity would obviate the most ordinary and most urgent cause of discord Mortgaging no little of what is called the property of the church (subtracted partly by fraud from ignorance and credulity and partly torn by violence from debility and dissension) I would raise the money requisite to obtain the co operation of Switzerland and the alliance of Savoy but taking care that our own forces much outnumber the allies, and in case of war keeping all the artillery in our hands

Michel Angelo But what would you do with the pope?

Machiavelli A very important consideration I would establish him in Venice where he would enjoy many advantages which Rome herself does not afford him First he would be successor to Saint Mark as well as to Saint Peter secondly he would enjoy the exercise of his highest authority more frequently by crowning a prince every year in the person of the Doge (for that title, and every other borne by the chief magistrate of each city, should continue), and a princess in the person of the Adriatic and moreover of solemnizing the ceremony of their nuptials thirdly and what is more glorious, he would be within call of the Bosniacs, who hearing his paternal voice, would surely renounce their errors abandon their vices, and come over and embrace the faith The Bull of Indulgences might be a little modified in their favor Germans had no objection to the bill of fare, but stamped and sweated to see the price of the dishes which more elegant men in France and Italy, having tasted them all, thought

reasonable enough But in Bosnia they must be reduced a trifle lower else they will be a stumbling block to the neophyte whose infirmer knees yet totter in mounting the *Santa Scala*

Michel Angelo Do not joke so gravely, Messer Niccolo for it vexes and saddens me

Machiavelli If you dislike my reasons take some others very different The nobility and people of Venice have less veneration for the Holy Father than have the rest of us Catholics and longer opposed his authority Beside as they prefer Saint Mark to Saint Peter there would always be a salutary irritation kept up in the body of Italy and all the blood would not run into the head

Michel Angelo Its coagulation there has paralyzed her

Machiavelli Furthermore, the Venetians would take measures that Saint Mark should have fair play, and that his part of the pugilistic ring should be as open and wide as the opposite And now, in order to obtain your pardon for joking so infelicitously let me acknowledge it among my many infirmities that I cannot laugh heartily I experience the same sad constriction as those who cannot bring out a sneeze or any thing else that would fain have its way You, however, have marvellously well performed the operation and now the ripples on lip and cheek on beard and whisker have subsided let me tell you, Messer Michel Angelo we form our wisest thoughts and projects on the depth and density of men's ignorance our strength rises from the vast arena of their weaknesses I know not when my scheme will be practicable but it has been and it may be again

Michel Angelo Finally, what is to become of Sicily, Sardinia, and Corsica?

Machiavelli I would place these islands at the emperor's disposal, to conciliate him

Michel-Angelo It would exasperate France

Machiavelli Let him look to that it would be worth his while Exasperated or not, France never can rest quiet. Her activity is only in her pugnacity trade, commerce, agriculture are equally neglected Indifferent to the harvests on

the earth before her she springs on the palm tree for its scanty fruit *

Michel Angelo She would not be pleased at your allusion

Machiavelli I wish she would render it inapplicable Italy in despite of her, would become once more the richest and most powerful of nations the least liable to attacks and the least interested in disturbing her neighbors Were she one great kingdom as some men and all boys desire, she would be perpetually at variance with Hungary Germany France and Spain The confederacies and alliances of republics are always conducive to freedom and never are hurtful to independence those of princes are usually injurious to the liberty of the subject and often the origin of wars Federal republics give sureties for the maintenance of peace in their formation and their position even those States with which any of them is confederated are as much interested in impeding it from conquests as from subjection In kingdoms the case is widely different Many pestilences grow weaker by length of time and extent of action but the pestilence of kingly power increases in virulence at every stride and seizure and expires in the midst of its victims by the lethargy of repletion At no period of my life have I neglected to warn my fellow citizens of the fate impending over them Only a few drops of the sultry and suffocating storm have yet fallen we stop on the road instead of pushing on and, whenever we raise our heads, it will be in the midst of the inundation

Michel Angelo I do believe that Lorenzo would have covered the shame of his parent State rather than have wantoned with its inebriety

* The population of France at this time amounted to scarcely fourteen millions Franche comte Lorraine Alsace and several cities on the borders of the Netherland not being yet annexed Her incessant wars of late generally disastrous had depopulated her provinces and there was less industry than in any other great nation round about her not excepting the Spanish Italy was supreme in civilization commerce and the fine arts and was at least as populous as at present

[5 There can be no doubt that Machiavelli desired the unity of Italy and that this desire of his is one reason for the admiration which he felt for Cæsar Borgia as long as Cæsar was successful The view which Landor has put in Machiavelli's mouth he would not have been likely to express himself]

Machiavelli He might by his example and authority have corrected her abuses and by his wealth united to ours have given work to the poor and idle in the construction of roads and the excavation of canals through the Maremma

Michel-Angelo It was easier to kill Antæus than to lift him from the ground Lorenzo was unable to raise or keep up Tuscany he therefore sought the less glorious triumph of leading her captive laden with all his jewels, and escorted by men of genius in the garb of sycophants and songsters

Machiavelli In fact, Messer Michel-Angelo we had borne too long and too patiently the petulance and caprices of a brawling and impudent democracy We received instructions from those to whom we should have given them and we gave power to those from whom we should have received it Republican as I have lived, and shall die I would rather any other state of social life than naked and rude democracy because I have always found it more jealous of merit more suspicious of wisdom more proud of riding on great minds, more pleased at raising up little ones above them more fond of loud talking, more impatient of calm reasoning more unsteady, more ungrateful and more ferocious above all because it leads to despotism through fraudulence, intemperance, and corruption Let democracy live among the mountains and regulate her village and enjoy her chalet let her live peacefully and contentedly amid her flocks and herds, never lay her rough hand on the balustrade of the council chamber never raise her boisterous voice among the images of liberators and legislators, of philosophers and poets

Michel-Angelo In the course of human things, you cannot hinder her All governments run ultimately into the great gulf of despotism, widen or contract them, straighten or divert them, as you will From this gulf the Providence that rules all nature liberates them Again they return, to be again absorbed, at periods not foreseen or calculable Every form of government is urged onward by another and a different one The great receptacle in which so many have perished casts up the fragments, and indefatigable man refits them

Machiavelli Other forms may take the same direction as democracy, but along roads less miry, and infested with fewer thieves.

Michel Angelo Messer Niccolo you have spoken like a secretary and a patrician I am only a mere mason as you see, and (by your appointment) an engineer You indeed have great reason to condemn the levity, the stupidity and the ingratitude of the people But if they prefer worse men to better the fault carries the punishment with it or draws it after and the graver the fault the severer the punishment Neither the populace nor the prince ever chooses the most worthy of all who indeed, if there were any danger of their choosing him would avoid the nomination?—for it is only in such days as these that men really great come spontaneously forward and move with the multitude from the front stilling the voice of the crier, and scattering the plumes of the impostor In ordinary times less men are quite sufficient and are always ready In a democracy the bad may govern when better are less required but if they govern injudiciously the illusion under which they were elected vanishes the harm they do is brief and attended by more peril to themselves than to their country Totally the reverse with hereditary princes being further from the mass of the community they know and care little about us they do not want our votes they would be angry if we talked of our esteem for them and if ever they treat us well, their security not their sympathy is the motive I agree with you, Messer Niccolo, that never were there viler slaves than our populace except our nobles and those mongrels and curs intermediate who lean indolently on such sapless trunks and deem it magnificent to stand one palm higher than the prostrate

Machiavelli A fine picture have you been drawing!—another *Last Judgment!*

Michel Angelo Your nobility founded in great measure on yourself is such that you would accept from me no apology for my remarks on that indiscriminately lavished by our enslavers among later families None in Tuscany, few in Europe can contend in dignity with yours which has given to our republic thirteen chief magistrates The descendants of a hunter from an Alpine keep in Switzerland can offer no pretence to any thing resembling it Yet these are they who bind and bruise us!—these are they who impose on us as governors men whom we expunge as citizens.

Machiavelli In erecting your fortification, you oppose but a temporary obstacle to the insult My proposal, many years ago, was the institution of national guards [6] from which service no condition whatever no age from adolescence to decrepitude, should be exempt But Italy must always be in danger of utter servitude unless her free States which are still rich and powerful, enter into a cordial and strict alliance against all arbitrary rule, instead of undermining or beating down each other's prosperity While one great city holds another great city in subjection —as Venice does with Padua and Verona as Florence with Siena and Pisa —the subdued will always rejoice in the calamities of the subduer and empty her cup of bitterness into them when she can although without the prospect or hope of recovering her independence For there are more who are sensible to affronts than there are who are sensible to freedom and vindictiveness, in many breasts the last cherished relic of justice, is in some the only sign of it

Michel-Angelo Small confederate republics are the most free, the most happy the most productive of emulation, of learning of genius of glory, in every form and aspect They also for the reason you have given, are stronger and more durable than if united under one principality This is proved too in the history of ancient Tuscany, which under her Lucumons resisted for many centuries the violent and vast irruptions of the Gauls and the systematic encroachments of the wilier Romans But the governors of no country possess so much wisdom as shall teach them to renounce a portion of immediate authority for the future benefit of those they govern much less for any advantage to those who lie beyond their jurisdiction

Machiavelli Italy and Europe in general would avoid the most frequent and the worst calamities by manifold and just federation, to the exclusion of all princes, ecclesiastical and secular Spain, in the multitude of her municipalities, is divided into republics, but jealous and incoherent Wiser Germany possesses in many parts the same advantages, and uses them

[6 The proposal was carried out See Villari vol ii p 256 Machiavelli's preference for a militia over the mercenaries employed by Italian States was due to his conviction that the creation of a nation could be effected only by creating a national army]

better but the dragon s teeth not sown by herself, shoot up between her cities Switzerland rears among her snows little fresh, and stout republics Italy, in particular is formed for them many of her cities being free all bearing within them the memory most the desire, of freedom No pontiff no despot can ever be friendly to science least of all to that best of sciences which teaches us that liberty and peace are the highest of human blessings And I wonder that the ministers of religion (at least all of them who believe in it) do not strenuously insist on this truth,—essentially divine since the founder of Christianity came on earth on purpose to establish peace and peace cannot exist, and ought not without liberty But this blessing is neither the produce nor the necessity of one soil only How different is the condition of the free cities in Germany from that of territories under the sceptre of princes! If seven or eight are thus flourishing with such obstacles on every side, why might not the rest without any? What would they all be when hindrances were removed when mutual intercourse mutual instruction mutual advantages of every kind were unrestricted? Why should not all be as free and happy as the few? They will be when learning has made way for wisdom, when those for whom others have thought begin to think for themselves The intelligent and the courageous should form associations everywhere and little trust should be reposed on the good-will of even good men accustomed to authority and dictation I venerate the arts almost to the same degree as you do for ignorance is nowhere an obstacle to veneration but I venerate them because, above them I see the light separating from the darkness

Michel Angelo The arts cannot long exist without the advent of freedom From every new excavation whence a statue rises there rises simultaneously a bright vision of the age that produced it, a strong desire to bring it back again a throbbing love an inflaming regret, a resolute despair, beautiful as Hope herself and Hope comes too behind

Men are not our fellow-creatures because hands and articulate voices belong to them in common with us they are then, and then only, when they precede us or accompany us or follow us, contemplating one grand luminary, periodically obscured, but

eternally existent in the highest heaven of the soul, without which all lesser lights would lose their brightness their station their existence

If these things should ever come to pass how bold shall be the step how exalted the head, of genius! Clothed in glorified bodies of living marble instructors shall rise out of the earth deriders of barbarism, conquerors of time heirs and coequals of eternity Led on by these, again shall man mount the ladder that touches heaven again shall he wrestle with the angels

Machiavelli You want examples of the arts in their perfection few models are extant Apollo Venus and three or four beside are the only objects of your veneration and although I do not doubt of its sincerity I much doubt of its enthusiasm and the more the oftener I behold them Perhaps the earth holds others in her bosom more beautiful than the *Mother of Love* more elevated than the *God of Day* Nothing is existing of Phidias, nothing of Praxiteles nothing of Seopas Their works collected by Nero, and deposited by him in his Golden Palace were broken by the populace, and their fragments cast into the Tiber

Michel Angelo All?—surely not all!

Machiavelli Every one too certainly For such was the wealth, such the liberality of this prince and so solicitous were all ranks and especially the higher to obtain his favor I entertain no doubt that every work of these consummate masters was among the thousands in his vast apartments Defaced and fragmentary as they are, they still exist under the waters of the Tiber

Michel-Angelo The nose is the part most liable to injury I have restored it in many heads, always of marble But it occurs to me (at this instant, for the first time) that wax would serve better,—both in leaving no perceptible line, and in similarity of color The Tiber, I sadly fear, will not give up its dead until the last day, but do you think the luxurious cities of Sibaris and Croton hide no treasures of art under their ruins? And there are others in Southern Italy of Greek origin and rich (no doubt) in similar divine creations Sculpture awaits but the dawn of freedom to rise up before new worshippers in the fulness of her glory

Meanwhile I must work incessantly at our fortress here, to protect my poor clay models from the Germans

Machiavelli And from the Italians although the least ferocious in either army would rather destroy a thousand men than the graven image of one

XVIII SOUTHEY AND LANDOR [1]

Southey Of all the beautiful scenery round King s weston the view from this terrace, and especially from this sun dial is the pleasantest.

I andor The last time I ever walked hither in company (which, unless with ladies, I rarely have done anywhere) was with a just, a valiant and a memorable man Admiral Nichols who usually spent his summer months at the village of Shire hampton, just below us There whether in the morning or evening it was seldom I found him otherwise engaged than in cultivating his flowers

Southey I never had the same dislike to company in my walks and rambles is you profess to have but of which I perceived no sign whatever when I visited you first at Lantony Abbey and afterward on the I ake of Como Well do I remember our long conversations in the silent and solitary church of Sant Abondio (surely the coolest spot in Italy), and how often I turned back my head toward the open door fearing lest some pious passer by or some more distant one in the wood above pursuing the path

[1 The meeting between Landor and Southey during which this Conversation might have taken place must have been in the winter of 1836 or the early spring of the next year Landor was then living at Clifton and Southey and he wandered together r visiting the places Southey had known in his youth (Life 372) King s weston lies lower down the Avon than Clifton on the hill above Shirehampton just as Landor describes it The two Conversations are taken up with a long criticism of Milton in which Landor shows himself a more reasonable and accurate critic than was common with him A large number of the reference as given in the 1876 edition are incorrect In the present edition these have been corrected to correspond with the Globe edition of Milton and others have been added (Works ii 1846 Work iv 1876)]

way that leads to the tower of Luitprand should hear the roof echo with your laughter at the stories you had collected about the brotherhood and sisterhood of the place

Landor I have forgotten most of them and nearly all but I have not forgotten how we speculated on the possibility that Milton might once have been sitting on the very bench we then occupied, although we do not hear of his having visited that part of the country Presently we discoursed on his poetry as we propose to do again this morning

Southey In that case, it seems we must continue to be seated on the turf

Landor Why so?

Southey Because you do not like to walk in company it might disturb and discompose you and we never lose our temper without losing at the same time many of our thoughts, which are loath to come forward without it

Landor From my earliest days I have avoided society as much as I could decorously, for I received more pleasure in the cultivation and improvement of my own thoughts than in walking up and down among the thoughts of others Yet, as you know, I never have avoided the intercourse of men distinguished by virtue and genius of genius, because it warmed and invigorated me by my trying to keep pace with it, of virtue, that if I had any of my own it might be called forth by such vicinity Among all men elevated in station who have made a noise in the world (admirable old expression!), I never saw any in whose presence I felt inferiority, excepting Kosciusco But how many in the lower paths of life have exerted both virtues and abilities which I never exerted, and never possessed!—what strength and courage and perseverance in some in others what endurance and forbearance! At the very moment when most, beside yourself catching up half my words, would call and employ against me in its ordinary signification what ought to convey the most honorific,— the term *self sufficiency*,—I bow my head before the humble, with greatly more than their humiliation You are better-tempered than I am, and readier to converse There are half-hours when, although in good-humor and good spirits, I would not be disturbed by the necessity of talking, to be the possessor of all the rich marshes we see yonder In this interval there is neither storm

nor sunshine of the mind but calm and (as the farmer would call it) *growing* weather in which the blades of thought spring up and dilate insensibly Whatever I do I must do in the open air, or in the silence of night, either is sufficient but I prefer the hours of exercise or what is next to exercise of field-repose —Did you happen to know the admiral?

Southey Not personally but I believe the terms you have applied to him are well merited After some experience, he contended that public men public women and the public press may be all designated by one and the same trisyllable He is reported to have been a strict disciplinarian In the mutiny at the Nore he was seized by his crew and summarily condemned by them to be hanged Many taunting questions were asked him to which he made no reply When the rope was fastened round his neck, the ringleader cried 'Answer this one thing, however, before you go sir! What would you do with any of us if we were in your power as you are now in ours The admiral then captain, looked sternly and contemptuously, and replied "Hang you by God! Enraged at this answer the mutineer tugged at the rope but another on the instant rushed forward exclaiming No captain! (for thus he called the fellow) 'he has been cruel to us flogging here and flogging there but before so brave a man is hanged like a dog you heave me overboard Others among the most violent now interceded and an old seaman not saying a single word came forward with his knife in his hand and cut the noose asunder Nichols did not thank him nor notice him, nor speak but looking round at the other ships in which there was the like insubordination he went toward his cabin slow and silent Finding it locked, he called to a midship man, "Tell that man with a knife to come down and open the door' After a pause of a few minutes, it was done but he was confined below until the quelling of the mutiny

Landor His conduct as controller of the navy was no less magnanimous and decisive In this office he presided at the trial of Lord Melville His lordship was guilty, we know, of all the charges brought against him but, having more patronage than ever minister had before, he refused to answer the questions which (to repeat his own expression) might incriminate him and his refusal was given with a smile of indifference a conscious

ness of security In those days as indeed in most others the main use of power was promotion and protection and *honest man* was never in any age among the titles of nobility and has always been the appellation used toward the feeble and inferior by the prosperous Nichols said on the present occasion If this man is permitted to skulk away under such pretences trial is here a mockery Finding no support he threw up his office as controller of the navy, and never afterward entered the House of Commons.—Such a person, it appears to me leads us aptly and becomingly to that steadfast patriot on whose writings you promised me your opinion —not incidentally as before but turning page after page It would ill beseem us to treat Milton with generalities Radishes and salt are the *picnic* quota of slim spruce reviewers let us hope to find somewhat more solid and of better taste Desirous to be a listener and a learner when you discourse on his poetry I have been more occupied of late in examining the prose

Southey Do you retain your high opinion of it?

Landor Experience makes us more sensible of faults than of beauties Milton is more correct than Addison but less correct than Hooker, whom I wish he had been contented to receive as a model in style rather than authors who wrote in another and a poorer language such, I think you are ready to acknowledge is the Latin

Southey This was always my opinion

Landor However, I do not complain that in oratory and history his diction is somewhat poetical

Southey Little do I approve of it in prose on any subject Demosthenes and Æschines, Lysias and Isæus and finally Cicero, avoided it

Landor They did but Chatham and Burke and Grattan did not, nor indeed the graver and greater Pericles, of whom the most memorable sentence on record is pure poetry On the fall of the young Athenians in the field of battle, he said, "The year hath lost its spring" But how little are these men, even Pericles himself, if you compare them as men of genius with Livy! In Livy, as in Milton, there are bursts of passion which cannot by the nature of things be other than poetical, nor (being so) come forth in other language If Milton had executed his

design of writing a history of England it would probably have abounded in such diction especially in the more turbulent scenes and in the darker ages

Southey There are quiet hours and places in which a taper may be carried steadily, and show the way along the ground but you must stand a tiptoe and raise a blazing torch above your head if you would bring to our vision the obscure and time worn figures depicted on the lofty vaults of antiquity The philosopher shows everything in one clear light the historian loves strong reflections and deep shadows but above all prominent and moving characters We are little pleased with the man who disenchants us but whoever can make us wonder must himself, we think, be wonderful, and deserve our admiration

Landor Believing no longer in magic and its charms we still shudder at the story told by Tacitus of those which were discovered in the mournful house of Germanicus

Southey Tacitus was also a great poet and would have been a greater had he been more contented with the external and ordinary appearances of things Instead of which he looked at a part of his pictures through a prism and at another part through a *camera obscura* If the historian were as profuse of moral as of political axioms, we should tolerate him less for in the political we fancy a writer is but meditating in the moral we regard him as a claiming In history we desire to be conversant with only the great, according to our notions of greatness we take it as an affront, on such an invitation, to be conducted into the lecture room, or to be desired to amuse ourselves in the study

Landor Pray go on I am desirous of hearing more

Southey Being now alone, with the whole day before us and having carried, as we agreed at breakfast each his Milton in his pocket let us collect all the graver faults we can lay our hands upon, without a too minute and troublesome research, not in the spirit of Johnson, but in our own

Landor That is abasing our eyes in reverence to so great a man, but without closing them The beauties of his poetry we may omit to notice, if we can, but where the crowd claps the hands, it will be difficult for us always to refrain Johnson I think has been charged unjustly with expressing too freely and

inconsiderately the blemishes of Milton There are many more of them than he has noticed

Southey If we add any to the number and the literary world hears of it we shall raise an outcry from hundreds who never could see either his excellences or his defects and from several who never have perused the noblest of his writings

Landor It may be boyish and mischievous but I acknowledge I have sometimes felt a pleasure in irritating by the cast of a pebble, those who stretch forward to the full extent of the chain then open and frothy mouths against me I shall seize upon this conjecture of yours and say every thing that comes into my head on the subject. Beside which if any collateral thoughts should spring up I may throw them in also as you perceive I have frequently done in my *Imaginary Conversations*, and as we always do in real ones

Southey When we adhere to one point, whatever the form, it should rather be called a disquisition than a conversation Most writers of dialogue take but a single stride into questions the most abstruse and collect a heap of arguments to be blown away by the bloated whiffs of some rhetorical charlatan, tricked out in a multiplicity of ribbons for the occasion

Before we open the volume of poetry, let me confess to you I admire his prose less than you do

Landor Probably because you dissent more widely from the opinions it conveys for those who are displeased with any thing are unable to confine the displeasure to one spot We dislike every thing a little when we dislike any thing much It must indeed be admitted that his prose is often too Latinized and stiff But I prefer his heavy cut velvet, with its ill placed Roman fibula, to the spangled gauze and gummed on flowers and puffy flounces of our present street walking literature So do you, I am certain

Southey Incomparably But let those who have gone astray keep astray, rather than bring Milton into disrepute by pushing themselves into his company and imitating his manner As some men conceive that, if their name is engraven in Gothic letters with several superfluous it denotes antiquity of family, so do others that a congestion of words swept together out

of a corner and dry chopped sentence which turn the mouth awry in reading make them look like original thinkers Milton is none of these and his language is never a patchwork We find daily in almost every book we open expressions which are not English never were and never will be for the writers are by no means of sufficiently high rank to be masters of the mint To arrive at this distinction it is not enough to scatter in all directions bold, hazardous undisciplined thoughts there must be lordly and commanding ones with a full establishment of well appointed expressions adequate to their maintenance

Occasionally I have been dissatisfied with Milton because in my opinion that is ill said in prose which can be said more plainly Not so in poetry if it were, much of Pindar and Æschylus, and no little of Dante would be censurable

Landor Acknowledge that he whose poetry I am holding in my hand is free from every false ornament in his prose, unless a few bosses of Luminity may be called so —and I am ready to admit the full claims of your favorite South Acknowledge that heading all the forces of our language he was the great antagonist of every great monster which infested our country and he has damned to trim his lion skin with lace No other English writer has equalled Raleigh, Hooker, and Milton, in the loftier parts of their works

Southey But Hooker and Milton you allow are sometimes pedantic In Hooker there is nothing so elevated as there is in Raleigh

Landor Neither he however, nor any modern nor any ancient has attained to that summit on which the sacred ark of Milton strikes and rests Reflections such as we indulged in on the borders of the Lirius come over me here again Perhaps from the very sod where you are sitting the poet in his youth sat looking at the Sabrina he was soon to celebrate There is pleasure in the sight of a glebe which never has been broken, but it delights me particularly in those places where great men have been before I do not mean warriors —for extremely few among the most remarkable of them will a considerate man call great —but poets and philosophers and philanthropists the ornaments of society, the charmers of solitude the warders of civilization the watchmen at the gate which tyranny would batter down, and the healers of

those wounds which she left festering in the field And now, to reduce this demon into its proper toad shape again and to lose sight of it open your *Paradise Lost*

Southey Shall we begin with it immediately?—or shall we listen a little while to the woodlark? He seems to know what we are about for there is a sweetness a variety, and a gravity in his cadences, befitting the place and theme Another time we might afford the whole hour to him

Landor The woodlark, the nightingale, and the ringdove have made me idle for many, even when I had gone into the fields on purpose to gather fresh materials for composition A little thing turns me from one idleness to another More than once when I have taken out my pencil to fix an idea on paper, the smell of the cedar, held by me unconsciously across the nostrils, hath so absorbed the senses that what I was about to write down has vanished, altogether and irrecoverably This vexed me for although we may improve a first thought and generally do, yet if we lose it, we seldom or never can find another so good to replace it The lattermath has less substance, succulence and fragrance than the summer crop I dare not trust my memory for a moment with any thing of my own it is more faithful in storing up what is another's. But am I not doing at this instant something like what I told you about the pencil? If the loss of my own thoughts vexed me, how much more will the loss of yours! Now pray, begin in good earnest

Southey Before we pursue the details of a poem, it is customary to look at it as a whole, and to consider what is the scope and tendency or what is usually called the moral But surely it is a silly and stupid business to talk mainly about the moral of a poem unless it professedly be a fable A good epic a good tragedy, a good comedy, will inculcate several Homer does not represent the anger of Achilles as being fatal or disastrous to that hero, which would be what critics call poetical justice but he demonstrates in the greater part of the *Iliad* the evil effects of arbitrary power, in alienating an elevated soul from the cause of his country In the *Odyssea* he shows that every obstacle yields to constancy and perseverance yet he does not propose to show it and there are other morals no less obvious Why should the machinery of the longest poem be drawn out to establish an

obvious truth which a single verse would exhibit more plainly and impress more memorably? Both in epic and dramatic poetry it is action and not moral that is first demanded The feelings and exploits of the principal agent should excite the principal interest The two greatest of human compositions are here defective I mean the *Iliad* and *Paradise Lost* Agamemnon is leader of the confederate Greeks before Troy to avenge the cause of Menelaus yet not only Achilles and Diomed on his side but Hector and Sarpedon on the opposite interest us more than the king of men the avenger or than his brother the injured prince about whom they all are fighting In the *Paradise Lost* no principal character seems to have been intended There is neither truth nor wit however in saying that Satan is hero of the piece unless, as is usually the case in human life, he is the greatest hero who gives the widest sway to the worst passions It is Adam who acts and suffers most and on whom the consequences have most influence This constitutes him the main character, although Eve is the more interesting Satan the more energetic and on whom the greater force of poetry is displayed The Creator and his angels are quite secondary

Landor Must we not confess that every epic hitherto has been defective in plan and even that each until the time of Tasso was more so than its predecessors? Such stupendous genius so much fancy so much eloquence so much vigor of intellect never were united as in *Paradise Lost* Yet it is neither so correct nor so varied as the *Iliad* nor, however important the action, so interesting The moral itself is the reason why it wearies even those who insist on the necessity of it Founded on an event believed by nearly all nations certainly by all who read the poem, it lays down a principle which concerns every man's welfare, and a fact which every man's experience confirms that great and irremediable misery may arise from apparently small offences But will any one say that, in a poetical view our certainty of moral truth in this position is an equivalent for the uncertainty *which* of the agents is what critics call the hero of the piece?

Southey We are informed in the beginning of the *Iliad* that the poet, or the Muse for him, is about to sing the anger of Achilles, with the disasters it brought down on the Greeks But

these disasters are of brief continuance, and this anger terminates most prosperously Another fit of anger, from another motive, less ungenerous and less selfish, supervenes and Hector falls because Patroclus had fallen The son of Peleus, whom the poet in the beginning proposed for his hero, drops suddenly out of sight abandoning a noble cause from an ignoble resentment. Milton in regard to the discontinuity of agency, is in the same predicament as Homer

Let us now take him more in detail He soon begins to give the learned and less obvious signification to English words In the sixth line —

That on the secret top &c

Here *secret* is in the same sense as Virgil's

Sorti quos his dantem jura Catonem

Would it not have been better to omit the fourth and fifth verses as encumbrances, and deadeners of the harmony and for the same reason, the fourteenth fifteenth and sixteenth?

That with no middle flight intends to soar
Above the Aonian mount while it pursues
Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme

Landor Certainly much better for the harmony of the sentence is complete without them and they make it gasp for breath Supposing the fact to be true the mention of it is unnecessary and unpoetical Little does it become Milton to run in debt with Ariosto for his

Cose non dette mai né in prosa o in rima

Prosaic enough in a rhymed romance, for such is the *Orlando* with all its spirit and all its beauty, and far beneath the dignity of the epic

Southey Beside it interrupts the intensity of the poet's aspiration in the words —

And chiefly thou O Spirit!

Again I would rather see omitted the five which follow that beautiful line,—

Dovelike satst brooding on the vast abyss

Landor The ear however accustomed to the rhythm of these sentences is relieved of a burden by rejecting them and they are not wanted for any thing they convey

Southey I am sorry that Milton (v 34) did not always keep separate the sublime Satan and the infernal Serpent The thirty eighth verse is the first hendecasyllabic in the poem It is much to be regretted I think that he admits this metre into epic poetry It is often very efficient in the dramatic at least in Shakspeare but hardly ever in Milton He indulges in it much less fluently in the *Paradise Lost* than in the *Paradise Regained* In the seventy third verse he tells us that the rebellious angels are

> A far remov ed from God and light of heaven
> A from the centre thrice to the utmost pole

Not very fit for creatures who could have measured all that distance and a much greater by a single act of the will

V 188 ends with the word *repair* 191 with *despair*

335 Nor did they not perceive the evil plight
I / / t/ /

Landor We are often in such *evil plight* of floundering in the prosaic slough about your neighborhood than in Bunhill Fields.

360 And Power thou art in heaven sat on throne

Excuse my asking why you and indeed most poets in most places make a monosyllable of *heaven*? I observe you treat *spirit* in the same manner and although not *peril* yet *perilous* I would not insist at all times on an iambic foot neither would I deprive these words of their right to a participation in it

Southey I have seized all fair opportunities of introducing the tribrachys, and these are the words that most easily afford one I have turned over the leaves as far as verse 584 where I wish he had written *Damascus* (as he does elsewhere) for *Damasco*, which never was the English appellation Beside, he sinks the last vowel in Meroe in *Paradise Regained* which follows and should consistently have done the same in Damasco, following the

practice of the Italian poets, which certainly is better than leaving the vowels open and gaping at one another

549 Anon they move
In perfect phalanx to the Dorian mood

Thousands of years before there were phalanxes schools of music, or Dorians

Landor Never mind the Dorians but look at Satan —

571 And now his heart
Distends with pride and hardening in his strength
Glories

What an admirable pause is here! I wish he had not ended one verse with *his* heart, and the next with "*his* strength

Southey What think you of

575 *Th t m ll f nt y*
Warred on by cranes

Landor I think he might easily have turned the flank of *that small infantry* He would have done much better by writing not

For never since created man
Met such imbodied force a *am d w th th*
C ld m t m than that small infantry
Warred on by cranes though all the giant brood &c

but leaving behind him also these heavy and unserviceable tumbrils, it would have been enough to have written —

Never since created man
Met such imbodied force though all the brood
Of Phlegra with the Heroic race were joined

But where, in poetry or painting shall we find any thing that approaches the sublimity of that description, which begins v 589 and ends in v 620? What an admirable pause at

Tear such as angels weep burst forth!

V 642 But *tempted* our *attempt* Such a play on words would be unbecoming in the poet's own person and even on the

lightest subject, but is most injudicious and intolerable in the mouth of Satan about to assail the almighty

672 *U d bted* sign
That in *h* womb was hid metallic ore

I know not exactly which of these words induces you to raise your eyes above the book and cast them on me perhaps both It was hardly worth his while to display in this place his knowledge of mineralogy or his recollection that Virgil in the wooden horse before Troy had said —

Ut mq armato milite complent

and that some modern poets had followed him

Southey

675 As when bands
Of pioneers with spade and pick axe armed
Forth run the royal camp to trench a field
Or cast a rampart

Nothing is gained to the celestial host by comparing it with the terrestrial Angels are not promoted by brigading with sappers and miners Here we are entertained (v 712) with

D l t symphonies and voices *w t*

among pilasters and *Doric* pillars

Verse 745 is that noble one on Vulcan, who

Dropt from the zenith like a falling star

Landor The six following are quite superfluous Instead of stopping where the pause is so natural and so necessary, he carries the words on,—

Dropt from the zenith like a falling star
On Lemnos the Ægean isle Thus they relate
Erring for he with this rebellious rout
Fell long before nor aught availd him now
To have built in heaven high towers nor did he scape
By all his engines but was headlong *t*
With his *ndu trio* crew to build in hell

My good Milton! why in a passion? If he was sent to build in

hell, and *did* build there give the Devil his due and acknowledge that on this one occasion he ceased to be rebellious

Southey The verses are insufferable stuff, and would be ill placed anywhere

Landor Let me remark that in my copy I find a mark of elision before the first letter in *scape*

Southey The same in mine

Landor *Scaped* is pointed in the same manner at the beginning of the fourth book But Milton took the word directly from the Italian *scappare*, and committed no mutilation We do not always think it necessary to make the sign of an elision in its relatives, as appears by *scape grace* In verse 752 what we write *herald* he more properly writes *harald* in the next *sovran* equally so following the Italian rather than the French

Southey At verse 768 we come to a series of twenty lines which, excepting the metamorphosis of the Evil Angels would be delightful in any other situation The poem is much better without these And, in these verses I think there are two whole ones and two hemistichs which you would strike out —

> As bee
> In spring time when the sun with Taurus rides
> Pour forth their populous youth about the hive
> In clu ter they among fre h dew and flower
> Fly to and fro or on the smoothened plank
> The suburb of their straw built citadel
> New rubbed with balm expatiate and confer
> Their state affairs So thick the aery crowd &c

Landor I should be sorry to destroy the suburb of the straw-built citadel or even to remove the smoothened [plank if I found them in any other place Neither the harmony of the sentence nor the propriety and completeness of the simile, would suffer by removing all between '*to and fro* and *so thick*,' &c But I wish I had not been called upon to '*Behold a wonder*'

Southey (Book II)

> High on a throne of royal state which far
> Outshone the wealth of Ormus and of Ind
> Or where the gorgeous ea t &c

[Globe ed reads smoothed]

Are not Ormus and Ind within the gorgeous East? If so would not the sense be better if he had written, instead of *Or* where *There* where?

Landor Certainly

Southey Turn over if you please another two or three pages, and tell me whether in your opinion the 150th verse —

In the wide womb of uncreated night

—might not also have been omitted advantageously

Landor The sentence is long enough and full enough without it and the omission would cause no visible gap

Southey

226 Thus Belial with words clothed in reason's garb
Counsell'd ill dp fl ltl
N t p a

These words are spoken by the poet in his own person very improperly they would have suited the character of any fallen angel but the reporter of the occurrence ought not to have delivered such a sentence

299 Which when Beelzebub perceived (than whom
Satan except none higher sat) with grave
Aspect he rose and in his rising seem'd
A pillar of State Deep on his front engraven
Deliberation sat and public care
And princely counsel in his face yet shone
Majestic though in ruin sage he stood
With Atlantean shoulders fit to bear
The weight of mightiest monarchies

Often and often have these verses been quoted without a suspicion how strangely the corporeal is substituted for the moral However Atlantean his shoulders might be the weight of monarchies could no more be supported by them than by the shoulders of a grasshopper The verses are sonorous but they are unserviceable as an incantation to make a stout figure look like a pillar of State

Landor We have seen pillars of State which made no figure at all, and which are quite as misplaced as Milton's But, seriously, the pillar's representative, if any figure but a meta-

phonical one could represent him would hardly be brought to represent the said pillar by *rising* up as —

Beelzebub in his *g* seem'd &c

His fondness for Latinisms induces him to write,—

329 *What* sit we then projecting peace and war?

For "*Why sit we*" as *quid* for *cur*. To my ear *What sit* sounds less pleasingly than *Why sit*.

I have often wished that Cicero who so delighted in harmonious sentences and was so studious of the closes, could have heard,—

351 So was his will
Pronounced among the Gods and by an oath
That h k h ve vh l mf re firm d

Although in the former part of the sentence two cadences are the same —

So was his will
And by an oath

This is unhappy. But at verse 412 bursts forth again such a torrent of eloquence as there is nowhere else in the regions of poetry, although *strict* and *thick* in v. 412 sound unpleasantly

594 The parch'ng wind[3]
Burns frore *i ld p f m th ff t fs*

The latter part of this verse is redundant and ruinous to the former.

Southey. Milton like Dante has mixed the Greek mythology with the Oriental. To hinder the damned from tasting a single drop of the *Lethe* they are *ferried* over —

611 *M d* with Gorgonian terror guards
The ford

It is strange that until now they never had explored the banks of the other four infernal rivers.

Landor. It appears to me that his imitation of Shakspeare,—

From beds of raging fire to starve in ice

[3 Globe ed. reads air.]

—is feeble Never was poet so little made to imitate another Whether he imitates a good or a bad one the offence of his voluntary degradation is punished in general with ill success Shakspeare on the contrary touches not even a worthless thing but he renders it precious

Southey To continue the last verse I was reading —

> And of itself the water flies
> All taste of living wight as it fled
> The lip of Tantalus

No living wight had ever attempted to taste it nor was it *this* water that fled the lip of Tantalus at any time least of all can we imagine that it had already fled it In the description of Sin and Death and Satan s interview with them there is a wonderful vigor of imagination and of thought with such sonorous verse as Milton alone was capable of composing But there is also much of what is odious and intolerable The terrific is then sublime and then only when it fixes you in the midst of all your energies and not when it weakens, nauseates and repels you

> 6,8 God and his Son except
> Created thing naught valu d he

This is not the only time when he has used such language evidently with no other view than to defend it by his scholar ship But no authority can vindicate what is false and no ingenuity can explain what is absurd You have remarked it already in the *Imaginary Conversations*, referring to

> *Th fa t fl d gl t Eve*

There is something not dissimilar in the form of expression when we find on a sepulchral stone the most dreadful of denunciations against any who should violate it —

> Ultimus suum moriatur

Landor I must now be the reader It is impossible to refuse the curtains satisfaction at

> [614] Thus roving on
> In confusd mar h forlorn the adventurous bands
> With shuddering horror pale and eyes aghast

> View'd first their lamentable lot and found
> No rest through many a dark and dreary vale
> They past and many a region dolorous
> O'er many a frozen many a fiery Alp
> Rocks caves lakes fens bogs dens and shades of death
> A universe of death

Now who would not rather have forfeited an estate, than that Milton should have ended so deplorably —

> Which God by curse
> Created evil *for* *evil only*
> *Which* *all I for* *deathless*

Southey How Ovidian! This book would be greatly improved not merely by the rejection of a couple such as these, but by the whole from verse 647 to verse 1007 The numbers would still be 705 —fewer by only sixty-four than the first would be after its reduction

Verses 1008 and 1009 could be spared Satan but little encouraged his followers by reminding them that, if they took the course he pointed out they were

> So much the nearer danger

nor was it necessary to remind them of the obvious fact by saying —

> Haste and poil and ruin are my gain [4]

Landor In the third book the Invocation extends to fifty-five verses, of these however there are only two which you would expunge He says to the *Holy Light* —

> But thou
> Revisit'st not these eyes that roll in vain
> To find thy piercing ray and find no dawn
> So thick a *drop* *serene* hath quencht their orbs
> Or dim suffusion veiled Yet not the more &c

[4 This criticism is very much confused Southey wishes to exclude the meeting with Sin and Death and apparently the whole of Satan's journey through chaos Where he intended to take up the action again it is difficult to say but as he considers verses 1008 and 1009 to be at the end of Satan's speech to his followers it is plain that he had no very clear idea himself The verses of course come at the end of the speech by Chaos]

The fantastical Latin expression *gutta serena* for amaurosis was never received under any form into our language and a *thick drop serene* would be nonsense in any I think every reader would be contented with,—

To find thy piercing ray Yet not the more
Cea l to wander where the Muses haunt &c

Southey Pope is not highly reverent to Milton, or to God the Father whom he calls a *schrool divine* The doctrines in this place (v 50) more Scripturally than poetically laid down are apostolic But Pope was unlikely to know it for while he was a papist he was forbidden to read the Holy Scriptures and when he ceased to be a papist he threw them overboard and clung to nothing The fixedness of his opinions may be estimated by his having written it the commencement of his *Essay* first —

A m ghty maze a maze without a plan

And then,—

A mighty maze b t t without a plan

After the seventy sixth verse, I wish the poet had abstained from writing all the rest until we come to 345 and that after the 382d from all that precede the 418th Again, all between 462 and 497 This about the Fool s Paradise —

The indulgences dispenses pardons bulls

—is too much in the manner of Dante whose poetry admirable as it often is is at all times very far removed from the dramatic and the epic

Landor Verse 586 is among the few inharmonious in this poem,—

Shoots invisible virtue even to the deep

There has lately sprung up among us a Vulcan descended body of splay foot poets, who unwilling

Incudi reddere versus

or unable to hammer them into better shape and more solidity tell us how necessary it is to shovel in the dust of a discord now

and then But Homer and Sophocles and Virgil could do with out it

What a beautiful expression is there in verse 546, which I do not remember that any critic has noticed!—

Obtains the brow of Horeb or Sinai hill

Here the hill itself is instinct with life and activity

Verse 574 '*But up or down* in '*longitude* are not worth the parenthesis

[iv 109] Farewell remorse! all good to me is lost

Nothing more surprises me in Milton than that his ear should have endured this verse

Southey How admirably contrasted with the malignant spirit of Satan in all its intensity is the scene of Paradise which opens at verse 131! The change comes naturally and necessarily to accomplish the order of events

The fourth book contains several imperfections The six verses after 181 efface the delightful impression we had just received

At one slight bound high o'erleapt all *bound*

Such a play on words so grave a pun is unpardonable and such a prodigious leap is ill represented by the feat of a wolf in a sheep fold, and still worse by

A thief bent to unhoard the *cash*
Of some rich burgher whose substantial doors
Cross-barred and bolted fast fear no assault
In at the window or *climb* o'er the tiles

I andor This in at the window is very unlike the bound high above all bound and *climbing* 'o'er the tiles is the practice of a more deliberate burglar

So since into his church lewd hirelings climb

I must leave the lewd hirelings where I find them they are, too many for me. I would gladly have seen omitted all between verses 160 and 205

Southey

[252] Betwixt them lawns or level down and flocks
Grazing the tender herb

There had not yet been time for flocks or even for one flock

Landor At verse 297 commences a series of verses so harmonious that my ear is impatient of any other poetry for several days after I have read them I mean those which begin —

For contemplation he and valour formed
For softness she and sweet attractive grace

and ending with,—

And sweet reluctant amorous delay

Southey Here indeed is the triumph of our language and I should say of our poetry if in your preference of Shakspeare you could endure my saying it But since we seek faults rather than beauties this morning tell me whether you are quite contented with —

She as a veil down to the slender waist
Her unadorned golden tresses wore
Disheveled but in wanton ringlets waved
As the vine curls her tendrils which implied
Subjection but required with gentle sway
And by her yielded by him best received

Landor Stopping there you break the link of harmony just above the richest jewel that poetry ever wore —

Yielded with coy submission modest pride
And sweet reluctant amorous delay

I would rather have written these two lines than all the poetry that has been written since Milton's time in all the regions of the earth We shall see again things equal in their way to the best of them but here the sweetest of images and sentiments is seized and carried far away from all pursuers Never tell me what I think is already on your lips that the golden tresses in their wanton ringlets implied nothing like subjection Take away, if you will —

And by her yielded by him best received

and all until you come to,—

[325] Under a tuft of shade

Southey In verse 385 I wish he had employed some other epithet for *innocence* than *harmless*

Verses 620 and 621 might be spared —

> While other animals inactive range
> And free as Adam's varied o'er the soil

660 Daughter of God and man accomplisht Eve!

Surely she was not daughter of *man* and of all the words that Milton has used in poetry or prose this *accomplisht* is the worst In his time it had already begun to be understood in the sense it bears at present

Verse 674. *These then though* '—harsh sounds so near together

700 *Mean* underfoot the violet
Crocus and hyacinth with rich inlay
Broidered the ground more colored than with stone
Of costliest emblem

The *broidery* and *mosaic* should not be set quite so closely and distinctly before our eyes I think the passage might be much improved by a few defalcations Let me read it —

> The roof
> Of thickest covert was inwoven shade
> Laurel and myrtle and what higher grew
> Of firm and fragrant leaf the violet
> Crocus and hyacinth

I dare not handle the embroidery Is not this sufficiently verbose?

Landor Quite

Southey Yet, if you look into your book again, you will find a gap as wide as the bank on either side of it —

> On either side
> Acanthus and each odorous bushy shrub
> *Fenced up* the verdant wall each beauteous flower
> Iris all hues roses and jessamin
> Reared *high* their *flourished* heads between and *right*
> *Mo*

He had before told us that there was every tree of *fragrant* leaf we wanted not each *odorous* shrub Nor can we imagine

how it *fenced up* a verdant wall it constituted one itself one very unlike any thing else in Paradise and more resembling the topiary artifices which had begun to flourish in France Here is indeed an exuberance and a wanton growth that mocks our scant manuring

705 In hadier bower
More sacred and equestered *tho gh b t f g d*
Pan or Sylvanu never lept

He takes especial heed to guard us against the snares of Paganism at the expense of his poetry In Italian books as you remember where Fate, Fortune Pan, Apollo, or any mythological personage is named incidentally notice is given at the beginning that no harm is intended thereby to the Holy Catholic Apostolic religion But harm is done on this occasion, where it is intended just as little

[719] On him *wh had t l* love authentic fire

This is a very weak and unsatisfactory verse By one letter it may be much improved —*stolen* which also has the advantage of rendering it grammatical The word *who* coalesces with *had* Of such coalescences the poetry of Milton is full In five consecutive lines you find three —

[III 398] Thee only extolled Son of thy Father's might
To execut his vengeance on his fo
Not so on man him through their malice fallen
Father of mercy and grace thou didst not doom
So strictly but much more to pity inclined

722 The God that made *b th* ky air earth and heaven

Both must signify two things or persons and never can signify more

From verse 735 I would willingly see all removed until we come to,—

Hail wedded love!

After these eight I would reject thirteen

In verses 773 and 774 there is an unfortunate recurrence of sound —

The flowery roof
Showered roses which the morn *ep d* Sle p on
Blest *p* *l*

And somewhat worse in the continuation —

And O yet happiest if ye seek
N happier state and *k w t l w no m*

Five similar sounds in ten syllables, besides the affectation of 'know to know

780 To their night watches in warlike parade

is not only a slippery verse in the place where it stands but is really a verse of quite another metre And I question whether you are better satisfied with the word *parade*

814 As when a spark
L ghts on a heap of nitrous powd r *la d*
h t f tl e t me m i t t r
Again t a rumored war

Its fitness for the turn and its convenience for the magazine adapt it none the better to poetry Would there be any detriment to the harmony or the expression if we skip over that verse, reading,—

Stored
Against a rumored war?

I andor No harm to either The verses 933 and 934 I perceive have the same cesura, and precisely that which rhyme chooses in preference, and Milton in his blank verse admits the least frequently

A faithful l a ler not to hazard all
Through ways of danger by himself untried

Presently, what a flagellation he inflicts on the traitor Monk!—

[947] To say and straight unsay pretending first
Wise to fly pain professing next the spy
Argues no leader *b t a liar trac d*

When he loses his temper he loses his poetry in this place and

most others But such coarse hemp and wire were well adapted to the stripped shoulders they scourged

> Satan! and couldst thou *f thf l* add? O name!
> O sacr l name of faithfulness profaned!
> Faithful to whom? to thy rebellious crew?
> Army of fiends fit body to fit head
> Was thi your discipline and fait engaged?
> Your military obedience to dr solve
> Allegiance to the acknowledged Power upreme?
> And thou sly hypocrite who now wouldst eem
> Patron of liberty who more than thou
> Once fawned and cringed?

You noticed the rhyme of *supreme* and *seem* Great heed should be taken against this grievous fault not only in the final syllables of blank verse but also in the cesuras In our blank verse it is less tolerable than in the Latin heroic where Ovid and Lucretius and Virgil himself, are not quite exempt from it

Southey It is very amusing to read Johnson for his notions of harmony He quotes these exquisite verses and says 'There are two lines in this passage more remarkably inharmonious

[7 0] Thi delicious place
For us too large / *thy* abundance wants
Partakers and uncropt *falls t* the ground

There are few so dull as to be incapable of perceiving the beauty of the rhythm in the last Johnson goes out of his way to censure the best thought and the best verse in Cowley —

> And the soft wings of Peace *o r l m* round

Certainly it is not iambic where he wishes it to be Milton like the Italian poets, was rather too fond of this cadence but in the instances which Johnson has pointed out for reprobation it produces a fine effect So in the verse —

> Not Typhon huge ending in snaky twine

It does the same in *Samson Agonistes* —

> Retiring from the popular noise I seek
> This unfrequented place to find some ease —
> Ease to the body some *ne to* the mind

Johnson tells us that the third and seventh are weak syllables,

and that the period leaves the ear unsatisfied Milton's ear happened to be satisfied by these pauses and so will any ear be that is not (or was not intended by nature to be) nine fair inches long Johnson is sensible of the harmony which is produced by the pause on the sixth syllable but commends it for no better reason than because it forms a complete verse of itself There can be no better reason against it

In regard to the pause at the third syllable it is very singular and remarkable that Milton never has paused for three lines together on any other point In the 327th 328th and 329th of *Paradise Lost*, are these —

[Bk i 326] His swift pursuers from heaven's gates pursue[5]
The advantage and descending tread us down
Thus drooping or with linked thunderbolts
Transfix us to the bottom of this gulf

Another whose name I have forgotten, has censured in like manner the defection and falling off in the seventh syllable of that very verse which I remember your quoting as among the innumerable proofs of the poet's exquisite sensibility and judgment,—

[ii 873] And toward the gate *rolling* her bestial train

where another would have written

And rolling toward the gate &c

On the same occasion you praised Thomson very highly for having once written a most admirable verse where an ordinary one was obvious —

And tremble every feather with desire

Pope would certainly have preferred

And every feather trembles with desire

So would Dryden, probably Johnson, who censures some of the most beautiful lines in Milton praises one in Virgil, with as little judgment. He says, 'We hear the passing arrow —

Et fugit *horrendum et iden* elapsa sagitta

Now there never was an arrow in the world that made a *horrible*

[5 Globe ed reads discern]

strıdor ın ıts course The only sound ıs ı very slight one occa sıoned by the feather Homer would never have fallen ınto such an ıncongruity

How magnıfıcent ıs the close of thıs fourth book, from,—

[970] Then when I am thy captıve

Landor I do not agree to the use of golden scales, not figurative but real jeweller s gold for weighing events —

[1002] *Bıll* and realms In these he put two *ıdentıcal* The equal each of parting and of fight The lattı *quıck* up flew and *kıcked* the beam

To pass over the slighter objection of *quıck* and *kıck* as displeasing to the ear the vulgarity of *kıckıng the beam* ıs ıntolerable He might as well among his angels and among sights and sounds be fitting them talk of *kıckıng the bucket* Here again, he pays a penalty for trespassing

Southey I doubt whether (fifth book) there ever was a poet ın a warm or temperate climate who at some time or other of his life has not written about the nightingale But no one rivals or approaches Milton ın his fondness or his success However, at the beginning of thıs book ın ı passage full of beauty, there are two expressions and the first of them relates to the nightingale which I disapprove —

41 Tunes sweetest his *lov labo d ong*

In *love labored*, the ear ıs gained over by the sweetness of the sound, but ın the nightingale s song there ıs neither the reality nor the appearance of labor

43 *Set off* the face of things

ıs worthier of Addıson than of Mılton

100 But know that ın the soul &c

This philosophy on dreams expounded by Adam, could never have been hitherto the fruit of his experience or his reflection

Landor

153 These are thy glorious works &c

Who could imagine that Milton who translated the Psalms worse than any man ever translated them before or since should in this glorious hymn have made the 148th so much better than the original? But there is a wide difference between being bound to the wheels of a chariot and guiding it He has ennobled that more noble one —

O all ye works of the Lord &c

But in

185 Ye mists and exhalations that now rise
From hill or steaming lake dusky or gray
Till the sun paint your fleecy skirts with gold &c

Such a verse might be well ejected from any poem whatsoever but here its prettiness is quite insufferable Adam never knew any thing either of paint or gold But casting out this devil of a verse surely so beautiful a psalm or hymn never rose to the Creator

Southey 'No fear lest dinner cool (v 396) might as well never have been thought of it seems a little too jocose The speech of Raphael to Adam on the subject of eating and drinking and the consequences is neither angelic nor poetical but the Sun *supping* with the Ocean is at least Anacreontic, and not very much debased by Cowley

[433] So *drew they at*
And to their viands *fell*

Landor

711 Meanwhile the eternal eye whose sight discerns
Abstrusest thoughts from forth his holy mount
And from within the golden lamp that burn
Nightly before him saw without their light
Rebellion rising &c
And smiling to his only Son thus said &c

Bentley, and several such critics of poetry, are sadly puzzled, perplexed, and irritated at this One would take refuge with the first grammar he can lay hold on, and cry *pars pro toto* another strives hard for another suggestion But if Milton by accident had written both *Eternal* and *Eye* with a capital

letter at the beginning they would have perceived that he had used a noble and sublime expression for the Deity No one is offended at the words 'It is the will of Providence or It is the will of the Almighty yet Providence is that which *sees before* and *will* is different from *might* True it is that Providence and Almighty are qualities converted into appellations and are well known to signify the Supreme Being but if the Eternal Eye is less well known to signify him or not known at all that is no reason why it should be thought inapplicable It might be used injudiciously for instance, the *right hand* of the Eternal Eye would be sinfully so but *smiles* not The Eternal Eye *speaks* to his only Son This is more incomprehensible to the critics than the preceding And truly if that eye were like ours and the organ of speech like ours also, it might be strange Yet the very same good people have often heard without wonder of a *speaking* eye in a very ordinary person and are conversant with poets who precede in expostulation or an entreaty for a reply with 'I ux mea There is a much greater fault which none of them has observed in the beginning of the speech —

[719] Son! thou in whom my glory I behold
In full resplendence heir of all my might

Now an *heir* is the future and not the present possessor and he to whom he is heir must be extinct before he comes into possession But this is nothing if you compare it with what follows a few lines below —

[729] Let us advise and to this hazard draw
With speed what force is left and all employ
In our defence lest unawares we lose
This high place in turn our own

Such expressions of derision are very ill applied and derogate much from the majesty of the Father We may well imagine that far different thoughts occupied the Divine mind at the defection of innumerable angels and their inevitable and everlasting punishment

Southey The critics do not agree on the meaning of the words,—

799 Much less for this to be our Lord

Nothing I think can be clearer, even without the explanation which is given by Abdiel in verse 813 —

> Canst thou with impious obloquy condemn
> The just decree of God pronounced and sworn
> That to his only Son by right endued
> With royal sceptre every soul in heaven
> *Shall bend the knee?*

V 869 There are those who cannot understand the plainest things yet who can admire every fault that any clever man has committed before Thus *beseeching* or *besieging*, spoken by an angel is thought proper and perhaps beautiful because a quibbler in a Latin comedy says *amentium haud amantium* It appears then on record that the first overt crime of the refractory angels was *punning* they fell rapidly after that.

I andor

870 *The tedge carry th a tdk g*

Whatever *anointing* the kings of the earth may have undergone, the King of Heaven had no occasion for it Who anointed him? When did his reign commence?

874 *Thr gh th unfi t h t*

Although our poet would have made no difficulty of accenting infinite' as we do and as he himself has done in other places, I am inclined to think that the accent is here on the second syllable He does not always accentuate the same word in the same place In verse 868, Bentley and the rest are in a bustle about —

W ll d d t thou adv
Y t otf thu idvi th t I fly
T kd fo t[6] dv t d l t th w uth &c

One suggests one thing, another another but nothing is more simple and easy than the construction, if you put a portion of the second verse in a parenthesis, thus —

> Yet (not for thy advice or threats) &c

Southey The archangel Michael is commanded (Book VI,

[6] Globe ed reads tents]

v 44) to do what the Almighty who commands it, gave him not strength to do as we find in the sequel and what was reserved for the prowess of the Messiah

Landor V 115 'Where faith and realty &c Bentley more unlucky than ever here would substitute *fealty* as if there were any difference between *fealty* and *faith* *reale* and *leale* are the same in Italian

Southey

160 Before thy fellow ambitious to win &

Surely this line is a very feeble one and where so low a tone is not requisite for the harmony or effect of the period But the battle of Satan and Michael is worth all the battle in all other poets I wish however I had not found

[332] A stream of *nectar* humor rising

The *ichor* of Homer has lost its virtue by exposure and application to ordinary use Yet even this would have been better

[335] Forth with all *speed* to his aid *was*
By angels

This Latinism is inadmissible there is no loophole in our language for its reception He once uses the same form in his History 'Now was fought eagerly on both sides Even here the word *it* should have preceded, and the phrase would still remain a stiff intractable Latinism In the remainder of this book there are much graver faults, amid highest beauty Surely it was unworthy of Milton to follow Ariosto and Spenser and many others in dragging up his cannon from hell, although it is not, as in the *Faerie Queen*, represented to us distinctly,—

Rammed with bullet round

Landor I wish he had omitted all from verse 483 —

Which into hollow engines *long ad- ded*
Thick rammed at *the* *thor- bor*

–down to 523 and again from 546, barbed with fire to

verse 628 where the wit which Milton calls the *pleasant vein*, is worthy of newly made devils who never had heard any before, and falls as foul on the poetry as on the antagonist

[656] Their *a m ur* helpt their *f rm*

Here *helpt* means *increased* A few lines above, we find *Light* is the *lightning* glimpse We should have quite enough of this description if at verse 628 we substituted *but* for *so*, and continued to verse 644 They pluckt the seated hills skipping over all until we reach 654 —

Which in the air &c

Southey I think I would go much further, and make larger defalcations I would lop off the whole from Spirits of purest light,' verse 660 to 831 then (for *He*) reading "God on his impious foes as far as 843, 'his ire Again, omitting nine verses to "yet half his strength The 866th line is not a verse it is turned out of an Italian mould, but in a state too fluid and incohesive to stand in English This book should close with,—

[874] Hell at last
Yawning received them whole and on them clos d

Landor The poem would indeed be much the better for all the omissions you propose if you could anywhere find room for those verses which begin at the 760th, "He in celestial panoply, and end with that sublime —

He onward came far off his coming shon

The remainder both for the subject and the treatment of it, may be given up without a regret. The last verse of the book falls "succiso poplite, —

Remember *and fear t tran gress*

Beautiful as are many parts of the Invocation at the commencement of the seventh book, I should more gladly have seen it without the first forty lines, and beginning,—

The affable archangel

Southey

[126] But knowledge is as food and needs no less
Her temperance over appetite

He might have ended here. He goes on thus —

to know
In measure what the mind may well contain

Even this does not satisfy him he adds —

Oppresses else with surfeit and soon turns
Wisdom to folly as *ur hm nt t wn t*

Now certainly Adam could never yet have known any thing about the meaning of surfeit and we may suspect that the angel himself must have been just as ignorant on a section of physics which never had existed in the world below, and must have been without analogy in the world above

Landor His supper with Adam was unlikely to produce a surfeit

139 *At l a t* our envious foe hath fail d

There is no meaning in *at least* 'at *last*' would be little better I would not be captious nor irreverent but surely the words which Milton gives as spoken by the Father to the Son bear the appearance of boastfulness and absurdity The Son must already have known both the potency and will of the Father How incomparably more judicious after five terrific verses, comes at once without any intervention —

[216] Silence ye troubled waves and thou deep peace!

If we can imagine any thought or expression at all worthy of the Deity, we find it here In verse 242 we have another specimen of Milton's consummate art —

And earth self balanced on her centre hung

Unhappily he permitted his learning to render him verbose immediately after —

Let there be light said God and forthwith light
Ethereal first of things quintessence pure
Sprung from the deep

The intermediate verse is useless and injurious beside, according to his own account light was not first of things He represents it springing from 'the deep after the earth had 'hung on her centre and long after the waters had been apparent We do not want philosophy in the poem we only want consistency

Southey There is no part of Milton's poetry where harmony is preserved, together with conciseness, so remarkably is in the verses beginning with 313 and ending at 338 but in the midst of this beautiful description of the young earth, we find

And bush with *frizzl'd* hair *implicit*

But what poet or painter ever in an equal degree has raised our admiration of beasts fowls and fish? I know you have objected to the repetition of *shoal* in the word *scull* [402]

Landor *Shoal* is a corruption of *scull* which ought to be restored serving the other with an ejectment to another place Nor do I like *fry* But the birds never looked so beautiful since they left Paradise Let me read, however three or four verses in order to offer a remark —

[437] Other on silver lakes and rivers bathed
Their downy breast the swan with arched neck
Between her white wings mantling proudly rows
Her state with oary feet yet oft they quit
The dank and rising on stiff pennons tower &c

Frequently as the great poet pauses at the ninth syllable it is incredible that he should have done it thrice in the space of five verses For which reason and as nothing is to be lost by it, I would place the comma after *mantling* No word in the whole compass of our language has been so often ill applied or misunderstood by the poet as this

Southey

Bk viii 38 Speed to describe whose swiftness number fails

Adam could have had no notion of swiftness in the heavenly bodies or the earth it is among the latest and most wonderful of discoveries

Landor Let us rise to Eve and throw aside our algebra The great poet is always greatest at this beatific vision I wish,

however he had omitted the 46th and 47th verses and also the 60th 61st 62d and 63d There is a beautiful irregularity in the 62d,—

> And from about her shot darts of desire

But when he adds, Into *all* eyes, as there were but four we must except the angel's two the angel had no occasion for wishing to see what he was seeing

> [76] He his fabric of the heavens
> Hath left to their dispute *perhaps* mortal
> His laughter

I cannot well entertain this opinion of the Creator's risible faculties and propensities Milton here carries his anthropomorphism much further than the poem (which needed a good deal of it) required

Southey I am sorry to find a verse of twelve syllables in 216 I mean to say where no syllables coalesce in which case there are several which contain that number unobjectionably

Landor In my opinion, a greater fault is to be found in the passage beginning at verse 287 —

> There gentle sleep
> First found me and with soft oppression seiz'd
> My drowsied sense untroubled though I thought
> I then was passing to my former state
> Insensible and forthwith to dissolve

How could he think he was passing into a state of which at that time he knew nothing?

> [Bk x] 291 Daughter of God and man immortal Eve!

Magnificent verse, and worthy of Milton in his own person but Adam in calling her thus is somewhat too poetical and too presumptuous for what else does he call her but daughter of God and *me*? Now the idea of *daughter* could never by any possibility, have yet entered his mind

> 328 *Affects* us with his foul esteem
> Of our integrity his foul esteem
> Sticks no dishonor on our front but turns
> Foul on himself

The word *affront* is to be taken in it plain English sense, not in its Italian but what a jingle and clash and clumsy play of words! In verse 353 I find, But bid her well be ware and *be ware* is very properly in two words so should *be gone* and *cannot*

[Bk viii] 299 To the garden of bliss thy seat prepared

This verse is too slippery too Italian

403 What thinkest thou then of me and this my state?
Seem I to thee sufficiently possest
Of happiness or not who am alone
From all eternity? for none I know
Second to me or like equal much less

This comes with an ill grace after the long consultation which the Father had holden with the Son equal (we are taught to believe) in the godhead

Southey

421 And through *all mbe ab lut* though one

I wish he had had the courage to resist this pedantic quibbling Latinism Our language has never admitted the phrase, and never will admit it

Landor I have struck it out you see and torn the paper in doing so In verse 576 —

Made so *torn* &c

I regret that we have lost this beautiful adjective which was well worth bringing from Italy Here follows some very bad reasoning on love, which (being human love) the angel could know nothing about, and speaks accordingly He adds —

[588] In loving thou dost well in passion not

Now love to be perfect should consist of passion and sentiment in parts as nearly equal as possible with somewhat of the material to second them

Southey We are come to the ninth book, from which I would cast away the first forty seven verses

Landor Judiciously In the 81st you will find a verb singular for two substantives "the land where flows Ganges and Indus The small fry will carp at this, which is often an elegance, but

oftener in Greek than in Latin in Latin than in French, in French than in English Here follow some of the dullest lines in Milton —

> Him after long debate irresolute
> Of thoughts resolved his final sentence chose
> Fit vessel fittest imp of fraud in whom
> To enter and his dark suggestion hide
> From sharpest sight for in the wily snake
> Whatever sleights none would suspicious mark
> As from his wit and native subtilty
> Proceeding which in other beasts observed
> Doubt might beget of diabolic power
> Active within beyond the sense of brute

Not to insist on the prosaic of the passage we may inquire who could be suspicious or who could know any thing about his wit and subtility? He had been created but a few days and probably no creature (brute human or angelic) had even taken the least notice of him or heard anything of his propensities *Diabolic* power had taken no such direction and the serpent was so obscure a brute that the Devil himself knew scarcely where to find him When, however he did find him —

[183] In laby rinth of many a round self rolled
His head the midst *wherein all* [illegible] *th subtile wiles*

—he made the most of him But why had he hitherto borne so bad a character? Who had ever yet been a sufferer by his wit and subtilty? In the very next verses, the poet says he was—

> Not nocent yet but on the grassy herb
> Fearless unfeared he slept

Southey These are the contradictions of a dreamer Horace has said of Homer, aliquando bonus *dormitat* This really is no napping it is heavy snoring But how fresh and vigorous he rise the next moment! And we are carried by him, we know not how, into the presence of Eve and help her to hold down the strong and struggling woodbine for the arbor I wish Milton had forgotten the manner of Euripides in his dull reflections, and had not forced into Adam's mouth —

[232] For nothing lovelier can be found
In woman than to study household good
And good works in her husband to promote

All this is very true but very tedious and very out of place
Landor Let us come into the open air again with her wish she had not confessed such a predilection for

581 The smell of sweetest *fennel*

for although it is said to be very pleasant to serpents no serpent had yet communicated any of his tastes to womankind Again I suspect you would wish our good Milton a little farther from the schools when he tells Eve that

[67] The wife where danger or dishonor lurks
Safest and seemliest by her husband stays
Who guards her or with her the worst endures

But how fully and nobly he compensates the inappropriate thought by the most appropriate!—

[278] Just then returned *at shut of evening flowers*

Southey

675 To whom the wily *adder* blithe and glad

I strongly object to the word *adder*, which reduces the grand serpent to very small dimensions It never is, or has been, applied to any other species than the little ugly venomous viper of our country Of such a reptile it never could be said that

[631] He *wisely* rolled
In *tangled*

Nor that

Hope elevates and joy
Brightens his crest

Here, again, Homer would have run into no such error But error is more pardonable than wantonness, such as he commits in verse 648 —

Fruitless to me though *fruit* be here to excess

Landor You have often no doubt repented in writing a word you had written just before Milton has done it inadvertently in

674 While each part
Motion *h* ast won audience ere th tongue &c

Evidently *each* should be *and* Looking at the tempter in the shape of an *adder* as he is last represented to us there is something which prepares for a smile on the face of Eve, when he first,—

[] *L k m*
Me who have to ich l and tasted yet both *l v*
An l l fe more perfe t have att ined than fate
Meant me

Now certainly the adder was the most hideous creature that ever had crossed her path nd she had no means of knowing unless by taking his own word for it that he was a bit wiser than the rest Indeed she had heard the voices of many long before she had heard his ind as they all excelled him in stately fineness she might well imagine they were by no means inferior to him in intellect and were more likely by their conformation to have reached and eaten the apple although they held their tongues In verse 781 —

She plucked sh *t*
Earth felt the wound and Nature from h r *at* &c

Surely he never wrote *eat* for *at* nor would he admit a rhyme where he could at least palliate it But although we met together for the purpose of plucking out the weeds and briars of this boundless and most glorious garden and not of over lauding the praises of others we must admire the wonderful skill of Milton in this section of his work He represents Eve as beginning to be deceitful and audacious as ceasing to fear, and almost as ceasing to reverence the Creator and shuddering not at extinction itself, until she thinks

[828] Of Adam wedded to another Eve

Southey We shall lose our dinner, our supper, and our sleep,

if we expatiate on the innumerable beauties of the volume we have scarcely time to note the blemishes Among these —

[853] In her face excuse
Came prologue and apology less[7] prompt

There is a levity and impropriety in thus rushing on the stage I think the verses 957, 958 and 959 superfluous and somewhat dull beside that they are the repetition of verses 915 and 916 in his soliloquy

Landor I wish that after verse 1003,—

Wept at completing of the mortal sin

—every verse were omitted until we reach the 1121st

They sat them down to weep

A very natural sequence We should indeed lose some fine poetry in which however, there are passages which even the sanctitude of Milton is inadequate to veil decorously At all events we should get fairly rid of "*Herculean* Samson' V 1060

Southey But you would also lose such a flood of harmony as never ran on earth beyond that Paradise I mean —

[1080] How shall I behold the face
Henceforth of God or angel erst with joy
And rapture so oft beheld? Those heavenly shapes
Will dazzle now this earthly with their blaze
Insufferably bright Oh! might I here
In solitude live savage! in some glade
Obscured where highest woods, impenetrable
To star or sunlight spread their umbrage broad
And brown as evening Cover me ye pines
Ye cedars with innumerable boughs
Hide me where I may never see them more

Landor Certainly, when we read these verses, the ear is closed against all others, for the day, or even longer It sometimes is a matter of amusement to hear the silliness of good men

[7 Globe ed reads
' in her face excuse
Came prologue and apology to prompt
Which with bland words at will she thus addressed]

conversing on poetry but when they lift up some favorite on their shoulders, and tell us to look at one equal in height to Milton I feel strongly inclined to scourge the more prominent fool of the two, the moment I can discover which it is

Southey

1064 Long they sat as *str k n m t*

Stillingfleet says, 'This vulgar expression may owe its origin to the stories in romances of the effect of the magical wand No thing more likely How many modes of speech are called vulgar in a contemptuous sense which because of their propriety and aptitude strike the senses of all who hear them and remain in the memory during the whole existence of the language' This is one, and although of daily parlance it is highly poetical and among the few flowers of romance that retain their freshness and odor

Landor

Bk x v 5 For what can scape the eye &c

When we find in Milton such words as *scape 'sdain*, &c with the sign of elision in front of them we may attribute such a sign to the wilfulness of the printer and the indifference of the author in regard to its correction He wrote both words without it, from the Italian *scappare* and *sdegnare* In verse 29 —

Maa haste to *mak* appear

—is negligence or worse, but incomparably worse still is,—

95 And usher in
The evening cool when he from wrath *m r o l*

Southey In 118 he writes *revile* (a substantive) for *rebuke* In 130 and 131 are two verses of similar pauses in the same place —

I should conceal and not expose to blame
By my complaint

The worst of it is, that the words become a verse, and a less heavy one by tagging the two pieces together

And not expose to blame by my complaint

I agree with you that, in blank verse, the pause, after the fourth

syllable which Pope and Johnson seem to like the best is very tiresome if often repeated and Milton seldom falls into it But he knew where to employ it with effect for example, in this sharp reproof twice over Verses 145 and 146 —

> Was she thy God that her thou didst obey
> Before his voice?

In verse 155 he represents the Almighty using a most unseemly metaphor —

> Which was thy part
> And person

A metaphor taken from the masks of the ancient stage certainly ill suits His part and person

Landor Here are seven (v 175) such vile verses and forming so vile a sentence that it appears to me a part of God's malediction must have fallen on them on their way from *Genesis* In 194 he says —

> Children thou shalt bring
> In sorrow forth and to thy husband will
> Thine shall submit he over thee shall rule

The Deity had commanded the latter part from the beginning it now comes as the completion of the curse

Verse 198 is no verse at all

> Because thou hast *hark'd* to the voice of thy wife

There are very few who have not done this *bon gré mal-gré*, and many have thought it curse enough of itself, poor Milton no doubt among the rest

Southey I suspect you will abate a little of your hilarity, if you continue to read from verse 220 about a dozen they are most oppressive

[266] I shall not lag behind nor err
The way thou leading

Such is the punctuation, wrong, I think I would read,—

> I shall not lag behind nor err
> The way thou leading

Landor He was very fond of this Latinism, but to *err a*

way is neither Latin idiom nor English From 293 to 316 what a series of verses!—a structure more magnificent and wonderful than the terrific bridge itself, the construction of which required the united work of the two great vanquishers of all mankind

Southey Pity that he could not abstain from a pun at the bridge foot by wondrous art *pontifical*' In verse 348 he recurs to the word *pontifice* A few lines above I mean verse 315 there must be a parenthesis The verses are printed —

> Following the track
> Of Satan to the self same place where he
> First light d from his wing and landed safe
> From out of chaos to the outside bare
> Of this round world

I would place all the words after Satan including *chaos*, in a parenthesis else we must alter the second *to* for *on* and it is safer and more reverential to correct the punctuation of a great poet than the slightest word Bentley is much addicted to this impertinence

Landor In his emendations, as he calls them both of Milton and of Horace for one happy conjecture he makes at least twenty wrong and ten ridiculous In the Greek poets and sometimes in Terence he beyond the rest of the pack, was often brought into the trail by scenting an unsoundness in the metre But let me praise him where few think of praising him or even of suspecting his superiority He wrote better English than his adversary Middleton and established for his university that supremacy in classical literature which it still retains

In verse 369 I find Thou us empower*ed* This is ungrammatical it should be empower*edst* since it relates to time past Had it related to time present it would still be wrong it should then be empower*est* I wonder that Bentley has not remarked this, for it lay within his competence

Southey That is no reason why he omitted to remark it I like plain English so much that I cannot refrain from censuring the phraseology of verse 345 'With joy and tidings fraught meaning *joyful tidings* and defended by Virgil's *munera lætitiamque dei* Phrases are not good, whether in Latin or English which do not convey their meaning unbroken and unobstructed The

best understanding would with difficulty master such expressions, of which the signification is traditional from the grammarians, but beyond the bounds of logic or even the liberties of speech You, who have ridiculed Virgil s *odor attulit auras* and many similar foolish tricks committed by him will pardon my animadversion on a smaller (though no small) fault in Milton

Landor Right Again I go forward to punctuation Bentley is puzzled again at verse 368 It is printed with the following —

> Thou hast achieved our liberty confined
> Within hell gates till now thou us empower d
> To fortify thus far and overlay
> With this portentous bridge the dark abyss

The punctuation should be,—

> Thou hast achieved our liberty confined
> Within hell gates till now thou us empowerdst &c

I wonder that Milton should a second time have committed so grave a grammatical fault as he does in writing thou empower*ed*, instead of empowered*st* Verse 380 —

> Parted by the empyreal bounds
> His *q adrat re* from thy orbicular world

Again the schoolmen, and the crazy philosophers who followed them It was believed that the empyrean is a quadrangle, because in the *Revelation* the Holy City is square It is lamentable that Milton should throw overboard such prodigious stores of poetry and wisdom, and hug with such pertinacity the ill-tied bladders of crude learning But see him here again in all his glory I wish indeed he had rejected "the plebeian angel militant, and that we might read, missing four verses,—

> [441] He through the midst *unmarked*
> Ascended his high throne

What noble verses fifteen together!

Southey It is much to be regretted that most of the worst verses and much of the foulest language are put into the mouth

of the Almighty For instance, verse 630, &c I am afraid you will be less tolerant here than you were about the quadrature

> My hell hounds to lick up the draff and filth
> till crammed and gorged nigh burst
> With suckt and glutted offal

We are come

[657] To the other five
Their planetary motions and aspects
In sextile square and trine and opposite—

693 Like change on sea and land *deral* blast

Although he is partial to this scansion, I am inclined to believe that here he wrote *sidereal* because the same scansion as *sideral* recurs in the close of the verse next but one —

Now *f m th* north

And if it is not too presumptuous, I hould express a doubt whether the poet wrote

[795] Is his wrath also? Be it man is not so

Not so and *also* in this position are disagreeable to the ear which might have been avoided by omitting the unnecessary *so* at the close

Landor You are correct *' 4 me* So I find it spelled (v 813) not *ah me !* as usually It is wonderful that of all things borrowed, we should borrow the expression of grief One would naturally think that every nation had its own and indeed every man his *Ay me !* is the *ahime* of the Italians *Ahi lasso !* is also theirs Our *gadso* less poetical and sentimental, comes also from them we need not look for the root

Southey Again I would curtail a long and somewhat foul excrescence terminating with course invectives against the female sex, and with reflections more suitable to the character and experience of Milton than of Adam I would insert my pruning knife at verse 871,—

To warn all creatures from thee—

and cut clean through, quite to "household peace confound, verse 908

Landor The reply of Eve is exquisitely beautiful, especially —

[930] Both have sinned but thou
Against God only I against God and thee

At last her voice fails her —

Me me only just obje t of his ire

Bentley and thousands more would read Me only me! But Milton did not write for Bentley nor for those thousands more Similar in the trepidation of grief is Virgil's 'Me, me adsum qui feci &c

1003 Why stand we longer shivering under fears
That show no end but death and have the power
Of many ways to die the shortest choosing
Destruction with de truction to destroy

This punctuation is perhaps the best yet published but after all, it renders the sentence little better than nonsense Eve according to this, talks at once of hesitation and of choice, 'shivering under fears and both of them 'choosing the shortest way yet she expostulates with Adam why he is not ready to make the choice The perplexity would be solved by writing thus —

Why stand we longer shivering under fears
That show no end but death' and have the power
Of many ways to die! the shortest hoose—
Destruction with destruction to destroy

If we persist in retaining the participle *choosing* instead of the imperitive *hoose* grammar sense, and spirit all escape us I am convinced that it was an oversight of the transcriber and we know how easily in our own works faults to which the eye and ear are accustomed escape our detection and we are surprised when hey are first pointed out to us

Southey I wish you could mend is easily,—

1053 On me the curse aslope
Glan ed on th ground with labor I must earn &c

Landor In the very first verse of the eleventh book, Milton is resolved to display his knowledge of the Italian idiom We

left Adam and Eve *prostrate* and prostrate he means that they should still appear to us although he writes —

> Thus they in lonliest plight repentant *stood*
> Praying

Stavano pregando would signify *they continued praying* The Spaniards have the same expression the French who never stand still on any occasion are without it

Southey It is piteous that Milton in all his strength is forced to fall back on the old fable of Deucalion and Pyrrha And the prayers which the Son of God presents to the Father in a golden censer mixed with incense had never yet been offered to the Mediator and required no such accompaniment or conveyance There are some noble lines beginning at verse 72 but one of them is prosaic in itself and its discord is profitless to the others In verse 86 —

> Of that *d f nd d* fruit,

—I must remark that Milton is not quite exempt from the evil spirit of saying things for the mere pleasure of defending them Chaucer used the word *def nd* as the English of education then used it in common with the French It was obsolete in that sense when Milton wrote so it was even in the age of Spencer who is forced to employ it for the rhyme

Landor This evil spirit which you find hanging about Milton, fell on him from two school rooms both of which are now become much less noisy and somewhat more instructive although Phillpots is in the one and although Brougham is in the other I mean the school rooms of theology and criticism

Southey You will be glad that he accents *contrite* (v 90) on the last syllable but the gladness will cease at the first of *receptacle* verse 123

Landor I question whether he pronounced it so My opinion is that he pronounced it *receptacle* Latinizing as usual and especially in Book VIII v 565,—

> By *str b ti g* overmuch to things &c

We are strange perverters of Latin accentuations From *irrito* we make *irritate* from *excito excite* But it must be con

ceded that the latter is much for the better and perhaps the former also You will puzzle many good Latin scholars in England and nearly all abroad, if you make them read any sentence containing *irrito* or *excito* in any of their tenses. I have often tried it and nearly all, excepting the Italians have pronounced both words wrong

Southey

[128] Watchful cherubim four faces each
Had *l k a d bl J nu*

Better left this to the imagination double Januses are queer figures He continues —

All their shape
Spangl d with eyes more numerous than those
Of Argus

At the restoration of learning, it was very pardonable to seize on every remnant of antiquity and to throw together into one great storeroom whatever could be collected from all countries, and from all authors, sacred and profane Dante has done it, sometimes rather ludicrously Milton here copies his *Argus* And, four lines farther on, he brings forward *Leucothoe*, in her own person, although she had then no existence

Landor Nor indeed had *subscriptions* to articles or any thing else yet we find 'but Fate *subscribed* not, v 181 And within three more lines 'The bird of *Jove* Otherwise, the passage is one of exquisite beauty Among the angels and close at the side of the archangel "*Iris* had dipped her woof Verse 267 *retire* is a substantive from the Italian and Spanish

How divinely beautiful is the next passage! It is impossible not to apply to Milton himself the words he has attributed to Eve —

[281] From thee
How shall I part? and whither wander down
Into a lower world?

My ear, I confess it is dissatisfied with every thing, for days and weeks, after the harmony of *Paradise Lost* Leaving this magnificent temple, I am hardly to be pacified by the fairy-built

chambers the rich cupboards of embossed plate, and the omnigenous images of Shakspeare

Southey I must interrupt your transports

[385] His eye might there command where ever stood
City of old or modern fame

Here are twenty-five lines describing cities to exist long after and many which his *eye* could not have commanded even if they existed then because they were situated on the opposite side of the globe But some of them the poet reminds us afterward Adam might have seen in spirit Diffuse as he is he appears quite moderate in comparison with Lasso on a similar occasion who expatiates not only to the length of five-and twenty lines but to between four and five hundred

Landor At verse 480 there begins a catalogue of diseases which Milton increased in the second edition of the poem He added —

Demoniac frenzy moping melancholy
And moonstruck madness pining atrophy
Marasmus and wide wasting pestilence

There should be no comma after 'melancholy as there is in my copy

Southey And in mine too He might have afforded to strike out the two preceding verses when these noble ones were presented

Intestine stone and ulcer colic pangs

are better to be understood than to be expressed His description of old age is somewhat less sorrowful and much less repulsive It closes with,—

[543] In thy blood will reign
A melancholy *damp* of cold and *dry*

Nobody could understand this who had not read the strange notions of physicians, which continued down to the age of Milton, in which we find such nonsense as '*adust* humors I think you would be unreluctant to expunge verses 624 625, 626, 627

Landor Quite and there is also much verbiage about the giants, and very perplexed from verse 688 to 697 But some of the heaviest verses in the poem are those on Noah from 717 to 737 In the following we have *vapour* and *exhalation* which signify the same

749 Sea covered sea
Sea without bore

This is very sublime and indeed I could never heartily join with those who condemn in Ovid

Omnia pontus erant deerant quoque litora ponto

It is true, the whole fact is stated in the first hemistich but the mind s eye moves from the centre to the circumference and the pleonasm carries it into infinity If there is any fault in this passage of Ovid Milton has avoided it but he frequently falls into one vastly more than Ovidian and after so awful a pause as is nowhere else in all the regions of poetry —

How didst thou grieve then Adam to behold
The end of all thy offspring! end so sad!
Depopulation!
The an th r flood
Of tea and orrow a fl od the al d wn d
And a k thee a thy n

It is wonderful how little reflection on many occasions and how little knowledge on some very obvious ones, is displayed by Bentley To pass over his impudence in pretending to correct the words of Milton (whose handwriting was extant), just as he would the corroded or corrupt text of any ancient author here in verse 895, "To drown the world with man therein or *beast*," he tells us that *birds are forgot* and would substitute With man or beast or *fowl*' He might as well have said that *fleas* are *forgot* Beast means every thing that is not man It would be much more sensible to object to such an expression is *men and animals*, and to ask, Are not men animals? and even more so than the rest, if *anima* has with men a more extensive meaning than with other creatures. Bentley in many things was very acute, but his criticisms on poetry produce the same effect as the water of a lead mine on plants. He knew no more about it than Hallam

knows, in whom acuteness is certainly not blunted by such a weight of learning

Southey We open the twelfth book we see land at last.

Landor Yes and dry land too Happily the twelfth is the shortest In a continuation of six hundred and twenty-five flat verses we are prepared for our passage over several such deserts of almost equal extent, and still more frequent in *Paradise Regained* But at the close of the poem now under our examination, there is a brief union of the sublime and the pathetic for about twenty lines, beginning with All in bright array '

We are comforted by the thought that Providence had not abandoned our first parents, but was still their guide that although they had lost Paradise, they were not debarred from Eden that although the angel had left them solitary and sorrowing, he left them 'yet in peace The termination is proper and complete

In Johnson's estimate I do not perceive the unfairness of which many have complained Among his first observations is this "Scarcely any recital is wished shorter for the sake of quickening the main action This is untrue were it true, why remark as he does subsequently that the poem is mostly read as a duty not as a pleasure I think it unnecessary to say a word on the moral or the subject for it requires no genius to select a grand one The heaviest poems may be appended to the loftiest themes Andreini and others, whom Milton turned over and tossed aside are evidences It requires a large stock of patience to travel through Vida and we slacken in our march although accompanied with the livelier sing song of Sannazar Let any reader who is not by many degrees more pious than poetical be asked whether he felt a very great interest in the greatest actors of *Paradise Lost*, in what is either said or done by the angels or the Creator and whether the humblest and weakest does not most attract him Johnson's remarks on the allegory of Milton are just and wise, so are those on the non materiality or non immateriality of Satan These faults might have been easily avoided but Milton with all his strength, chose rather to make antiquity his shield-bearer, and to come forward under a protection which he might proudly have disdained

Southey You will not countenance the critic, nor Dryden

whom he quotes in saying that Milton saw Nature through the spectacles of books

Landor Unhappily, both he and Dryden saw Nature from between the houses of Fleet Street If ever there was a poet who knew her well and described her in all her loveliness, it was Milton In the *Paradise Lost* how profuse in his descriptions as became the time and place! In the *Allegro* and *Penseroso*, how exquisite and select!

Johnson asks What Englishman can take delight in transcribing passages which if they lessen the reputation of Milton, diminish in some degree the honor of our country! I hope the honor of our country will always rest on truth and justice It is not by concealing what is wrong that any thing right can be accomplished There is no pleasure in transcribing such passages but there is great utility Inferior writers exercise no interest, attract no notice and serve no purpose Johnson has himself done great good by exposing great faults in great authors His criticism on Milton's highest work is the most valuable of all his writings He seldom is erroneous in his censures but he never is sufficiently excited to admiration of what is purest and highest in poetry He has this in common with common minds (from which however, his own is otherwise far remote) to be pleased with what is nearly on a level with him and to drink as contentedly a heady beverage with its discolored froth as what is of the best vintage He is morbid not only in his weakness but in his strength There is much to pardon much to pity much to respect and no little to admire, in him

After I have been reading the *Paradise Lost* I can take up no other poet with satisfaction I seem to have left the music of Handel for the music of the streets or at best for drums and fifes Although in Shakspeare there are occasional bursts of harmony no less sublime yet, if there were many such in continuation it would be hurtful, not only in comedy, but also in tragedy The greater part should be equable and conversational For if the excitement were the same at the beginning, the middle, and the end, if, consequently (as must be the case), the language and versification were equally elevated throughout,—any long poem would be a bad one, and, worst of

all a drama In our English heroic verse such as Milton has composed it there is a much greater variety of feet of movement of musical notes and bars than in the Greek heroic and the final sounds are incomparably more diversified My predilection in youth was on the side of Homer for I had read the *Iliad* twice, and the *Odyssea* once before the *Paradise Lost* Averse as I am to every thing relating to theology and especially to the view of it thrown open by this poem I recur to it incessantly as the noblest specimen in the world of eloquence harmony and genius

Southey Learned and sensible men are of opinion that the *Paradise Lost* should have ended with the words Providence their guide It might very well have ended there but we are unwilling to lose sight all at once of our first parents Only one more glimpse is allowed us we are thankful for it We have seen the natural tears they dropped we have seen that they wiped them *soon* And why was it? Not because the world was all before them but because there still remained for them under the guidance of Providence not indeed the delights of Paradise, now lost for ever but the genial clime and calm repose of Eden

Landor It has been the practice in late years to supplant one dynasty by another political and poetical Within our own memory no man had ever existed who preferred Lucretius on the whole to Virgil or Dante to Homer But the great Florentine in these days is extolled high above the Grecian and Milton Few, I believe, have studied him more attentively or with more delight than I have but, beside the prodigious disproportion of the bad to the good, there are fundamental defects which there are not in either of the other two In the *Divina Commedia* the characters are without any bond of union any field of action any definite aim There is no central light above the Bolge, and we are chilled in Paradise even at the side of Beatrice

Southey Some poetical Perillus must surely have invented the *terza rima* I feel in reading it as a school boy feels when he is beaten over the head with a bolster

Landor We shall hardly be in time for dinner What should we have been if we had repeated with just eulogies all the noble things in the poem we have been reading?

Southey They would never have weaned you from the *Mighty Mother* who placed her turreted crown on the head of Shakspeare

Landor A rib of Shakspeare would have made a Milton the same portion of Milton, all poets born ever since

SECOND CONVERSATION[1]

Southey As we are walking on, and before we open our Milton again we may digress a little in the direction of those poets who have risen up from under him, and of several who seem to have never had him in sight

Landor We will, if you please and I hope you may not find me impatient to attain the object of our walk However, let me confess to you, at starting that I disapprove of models, even of the most excellent. Faults may be avoided especially if they are pointed out to the inexperienced in such bright examples as Milton and teachers in schools and colleges would do well to bring them forward instead of inculcating an indiscriminate admiration But every man's mind if there is enough of it, has its peculiar bent. Milton may be imitated and has been where he is stiff where he is inverted where he is pedantic and probably those men we take for mockers were unconscious of their mockery But who can teach, or who is to be taught, his richness, or his tenderness, or his strength? The closer an inferior poet comes to a great model, the more disposed am I to sweep him out of my way

Southey Yet you repeat with enthusiasm the Latin poetry of Robert Smith an imitator of Lucretius

Landor I do, for Lucretius himself has nowhere written such a continuity of admirable poetry He is the only modern Latin poet who has composed three sentences together worth reading and, indeed, since Ovid, no ancient has done it. I ought to bear great ill-will toward him for he drove me from the path of poetry I had chosen, and I crept into a lower What

[1 Works II 1846 Works IV 1876]

a wonderful thing it is that the most exuberant and brilliant wit and the purest poetry in the course of eighteen centuries, should have flowed from two brothers!

Southey We must see through many ages before we see through our own distinctly Few among the best judges and even among those who desired to judge dispassionately and impartially have beheld their contemporaries in those proportions in which they appeared a century later The ancients have greatly the advantage over us Scarcely can any man believe that one whom he has seen in coat and cravat can possibly be so great as one who wore a chlamys and a toga Those alone look gigantic whom Time '*multo aere sepsit*' or whom childish minds for the amusement of other minds more childish have lifted upon stilts Nothing is thought so rash as to mention a modern with an ancient but when both are ancient the last comer often stands first The present form one cluster the past another We are petulant if some of the existing have pushed by too near us but we walk up composedly to the past with all our prejudices behind us We compare them leisurely one with another and feel a pleasure in contributing to render them a plenary however a tardy justice In the fervor of our zeal, we often exceed it which we never are found doing with our contemporaries, unless in malice to one better than the rest Some of our popular and most celebrated authors are employed by the booksellers to cry up the wares on hand or forthcoming partly for money and partly for payment in kind Without such management, the best literary production is liable to moulder on the shelf

Landor A wealthy man builds an ample mansion, well proportioned in all its parts well stored with the noblest models of antiquity extensive vales and downs and forests stretch away from it in every direction but the stranger must of necessity pass it by unless a dependent is stationed at a convenient lodge to admit and show him in Such you have given me to understand is become the state of our literature The bustlers who rise into notice by playing at leap frog over one another's shoulders will disappear when the game is over and no game is shorter But was not Milton himself kept beyond the paling? Nevertheless, how many *toupees* and *roquelaures*, and other odd things with odd names, have fluttered among the jays in the cherry orchard, while

we tremble to touch with the finger's end his grave, close buttoned gabardine! He was called strange and singular long before he was acknowledged to be great so be sure, was Shakspeare, so, be sure was Bacon and so were all the rest, in the order of descent You are too generous to regret that your liberal praise of Wordsworth was seized upon with avidity by his admirers not only to win others to their party but also to depress your merits Nor will you triumph over their folly in confounding what is pitiful with what is admirable in him rather will you smile and without a suspicion of malice, find the cleverest of these good people standing on his low joint-stool with a slender piece of wavering tape in his hand measuring him with Milton back to back There is as much difference between them as there is between a celandine and an aloe The one lies at full length and full breadth along the ground the other rises up stiff strong lofty, beautiful in the play of its slenderer branches overshadowing with the infinitude of its grandeur

Southey You will be called to account as resentful and not for yourself, which you never have been thought but for another —a graver fault in the estimation of most

Landor I do not remember that resentment has ever made me commit an injustice Instead of acrimony, it usually takes the form of ridicule, and the sun absorbs whatever is noxious in the vapor

Southey You think me mild and patient yet I have found it difficult to disengage from my teeth the clammy and bitter heaviness of some rotten nuts with which my Edinburgh hosts have regaled me, and you little know how tiresome it is to wheeze over the chaff and thistle beards in the chinky manger of Hallam

Landor We are excellent Protestants in asserting the liberty of private judgment on all the mysteries of poetry denying the exercise of a decretal to any one man, however intelligent and

[a There are several attacks upon Hallam in this Conversation Landor appears to have had two reasons for disliking him In the first place he always ascribed to Hallam an unfavourable review of the Pentameron which appeared in the *Foreign Quarterly* moreover Landor had met Hallam at Sir Charles Elton's and had been snubbed by him (See Forster's Life p 204]

enlightened but assuming it for a little party of our own with *Self* in the chair A journalist who can trip up a slippery minister fancies himself able to pull down the loftiest poet or the soundest critic It is amusing to see the labors of Lilliput

Southey I have tasted the contents of every bin down to the ginger beer of Brougham The balance of criticism is not yet fixed to any beam in the public wine-houses that offer it, but is held unevenly by intemperate hands, and is swayed about by every puff of wind

Landor Authors should never be seen by authors, and little by other people The Dalai Lama is a god to the imagination a child to the sight and a poet is much the same only that the child excites no vehemence while the poet is staked and faggoted by his surrounding brethren,—all from pure love however partly for himself partly for truth When it was a matter of wonder how Keats who was ignorant of Greek could have written his Hyperion Shelley whom envy never touched, gave as a reason 'Because he *was* a Greek Wordsworth, being asked his opinion of the same poem called it, scoffingly, a pretty piece of paganism Yet he himself in the best verses he ever wrote and beautiful ones they are reverts to the powerful influence of the pagan creed

Southey How many who write fiercely or contemptuously against us, not knowing us at all, would, if some accident or whim had never pushed them in the wrong direction write with as much satisfaction to themselves a sonnet full of tears and tenderness on our death! In the long voyage we both of us may soon expect to make the little shell fish will stick to our keels, and retard us one knot in the thousand But while we are here, let us step aside and stand close by the walls of the old houses making room for the swell mob of authors to pass by with their puffiness of phraseology their german silver ornaments their bossy and ill-soldered sentences their little and light parlor faggots of trim philosophy and their top heavy baskets of false language false criticism and false morals

Landor Our sinews have been scarred and hardened with the red hot implements of Byron, and by way of refreshment, we are now standing up to the middle in the marsh We are told that the highly-seasoned is unwholesome and we have taken in

good earnest to clammy rye bread boiled turnips and scrag of mutton If there is nobody who now can guide us through the glades in the Forest of Arden, let us hail the first who will conduct us safely to the gates of Ludlow Castle But we have other reasons left on hand For going through the *Paradise Regained*, how many days indulgence will you grant me?

Southey There are some beautiful passages, as you know, although not numerous As the poem is much shorter than the other I will spare you the annoyance of uncovering its nakedness I remember to have heard you say that your ear would be better pleased, and your understanding equally, if there had been a pause at the close of the fourth verse

Landor True the three following are useless and heavy, would also make another defalcation, of the five after "else" If the deeds he relates are

Above heroic th[illegible]h in e t don

it was unnecessary to say that they are

Worthy to have not remained so long unsung

Southey Satan, in his speech, seems to have caught hoarseness and rheumatism since we met him last What a verse is,—

[85] This is my Son beloved in him *am* pleased!

It would not have injured it to have made it English, by writing "in him I am pleased It would only have continued a sadly dull one

[118] Of many a pleasant realm—*and province wide*

[139] The Holy Ghost and the power of the Highest

But this is hardly more prosaic than, 'Oh,[3] what a multitude of thoughts, at once awakened in me, swarm, while I consider what within I feel myself, and hear!' &c But the passage has reference to the poet, and soon becomes very interesting on that account.

[175] But to vanquish by wisdom hellish wiles

[3 Line 195 Globe ed.]

It is difficult so to modulate our English verse as to render this endurable to the ear The first line in the *Gerusalemme Liberata* begins with a double trochee *Canto l arme* The word *But* is too feeble for the trochee to turn on We come presently to such verses as we shall never see again out of this poem —

[299] And he till on wa led but with such thoughts
Accompanied of things past and to come
Lodged in his br ast *w ll m ght re omm d*
S h ol t d before h s t uety

[360] But was driven
With them from bliss to the bottomless deep

This is dactylic

With them from | bliss to the bottomless | deep

412 He before hal sat
Among the prime in plendor now lepo ed
Ejected *mpt d* gazed unpitied hunn d
A spectacle of ruin *r* of scorn &c

Or should be *and*

[436] Which they who ask d have seldom *d tood*
And not w ll *der to d* as *good* not known

To avoid the jingle which perhaps he preferred, he might have written *as well* ' but how prosaic !

Landor The only tolerable part of the first book are the six closing lines, and these are the more acceptable because they are the closing ones.

Southey The second book opens inauspiciously The Devil himself was never so unlike the Devil as these verses are unlike verses —

[7] Andrew and Simon *famou afte kn wn*
With others though in holy writ not named
Now missing him &c
[27] Plain fishermen no greater men *them call*

Landor I do not believe that any thing short of your friendship would induce me to read a third time, during my life the *Paradise Regained* and I now feel my misfortune and imprudence in having given to various friends this poem and many

others in which I have marked with a pencil the faults and beauties The dead level lay wide and without a finger-post, the highest objects appeared with few exceptions, no higher or ornamental than bulrushes We shall spend but little time in repeating all the passages where they occur and it will be a great relief to us Invention energy and grandeur of design—the three great requisites to constitute a great poet, and which no poet since Milton hath united—are wanting here Call the design a grand one if you will you cannot however call it his. Wherever there are thought imagination and energy grace invariably follows otherwise the colossus would be without its radiance and we should sail by with wonder and astonishment, and gather no roses and gaze at no images on the sunny isle

Southey Shakspeare whom you not only prefer to every other poet but think he contains more poetry and more wisdom than all the rest united, is surely less grand in his designs than several

Landor To the eye But *Othello* was loftier than the citadel of Troy and what a Paradise fell before him! Let us descend, for from *Othello* we *must* descend, whatever road we take Let us look at *Julius Cæsar* No man ever overcame such difficulties or produced by his life and death such a change in the world we inhabit But that also is a grand design which displays the interior workings of the world within us and where we see the imperishable and unalterable passions depicted *al fresco* on a lofty dome Our other dramatists painted only on the shambles, and represented what they found there,—blood and garbage We leave them a few paces behind us and step over the gutter into the green market There are, however, men rising up among us, endowed with exquisiteness of taste and intensity of thought At no time have there been so many who write well in so many ways

Southey Have you taken breath and are you ready to go on with me?

Landor More than ready,—alert For we see before us a longer continuation of good poetry than we shall find again throughout the whole poem, beginning at verse 153, and terminating at 224. In these, however, there are some bad verses, such as,—

[150] Among daughters of men the fairest found

[171] And made him bow to the gods of his wives

Verse 180 —

Cast wanton eyes on the daughters of men

—is false grammar thou *cast* for thou *astedst* I find the same fault where I am as much surprised to find it, in Shelley —

Thou lovest but neerest when love is sad satiety

Shelley in his *Cenci* has overcome the greatest difficulty that ever was overcome in poetry although he has not risen to the greatest elevation He possesses less vigor than Byron and less command of language than Keats but I would rather have written his

Music when soft voices die

than all that Beaumont and Fletcher ever wrote together with all of their contemporaries excepting Shakspeare

Southey It is wonderful that Milton should praise the continence of Alexander as well as of Scipio Few conquerors had leisure for more excesses or indulged in greater than Alexander He was reserved on one remarkable occasion we hear of only one Scipio a much better man and temperate in all things would have been detested even in Rome, if he had committed that crime from which the forbearance is foolishly celebrated is his chief virtue

You will not refuse your approbation to another long passage, beginning at verse 260 and ending at 300 But at the conclusion of them where the Devil says that 'beauty[4] stands in the admiration only of weak minds he savors a little of the Puritan Milton was sometimes angry with her but never had she a more devoted or a more discerning admirer For these forty good verses you will pardon,—

[243] After forty days fasting *had remained*

[4 For beauty stands in the admiration only of weak minds led captive is line 220 The passage at whose conclusion it comes must be that praised by Landor above and not the passage which Southey here commends There is some confusion in the passage as it now stands]

Landor Very much like the progress of Milton himself in this *jejunery* I remember your description of the cookery in Portugal and Spain, which my own experience most bitterly confirmed, but I never met with a *bonito* "gris-amber steamed" This certainly was reserved for the Devil's own cookery Our Saviour, I think, might have fasted another forty days before he could have stomached this dainty and the Devil, if he had had his wits about him might have known as much

Southey I have a verse in readiness which may serve as a napkin to it —

[405] And with these words his temptation pursued

where it would have been very easy to have rendered it less disagreeable to the ear by a transposition —

And his temptation with these words pursued

I am afraid you will object to a redundant heaviness in—

[427] Get *rich* first—get *wealth*—and *t easure heap*

and no authority will reconcile you to roll calls of proper names, such as—

[361] Launcelot or Pellias or Pellenore

and—

[446] Quintius Fabricius Curius Regulus,

or, again, to such a verse as—

[428] Not difficult if thou hearken to me

Verse 461,—

To him who wears the regal diadem

—is quite superfluous and adds nothing to the harmony Verses 472-476 have the same cesura. This, I believe has never been

[Line 342 (Globe ed)

beasts of chase or fowl of game
In pastry built or from the spit or boiled
Gris amber steamed

There is no *bonito* in Milton]

remarked and yet is the most remarkable thing in all Milton's poetry

It is wonderful that any critic should be so stupid as a dozen or two of them have proved themselves to be in applying the last verses of this second book to Christina of Sweden —

> To *g* a kingdom hath been thought
> Greater and nobler done and to lay down
> Far more magnanimous than to assume
> *Rich* are needle's then &c

Whether he had written this before or after the abdication of Richard Cromwell, they are equally applicable to him He did retire not only from sovereignty but from riches. Christina took with her to Rome prodigious wealth and impoverished Sweden by the pension she exacted

The last lines are intolerably harsh —

Oft t better *m d*

It may have been written often a great relief to the ear and no detriment to the sense or expression We never noticed his care in avoiding such a ruggedness in verse 401,—

Who e pains have earn d the *fa f t* spoil

He employed '*far fet* instead of *far-fetch d* ' not only because the latter is in conversational use but because no sound is harsher than '*fetch d* and especially before two sequent consonants, followed by such words as '*with that* It is curious that he did not prefer "*wherewith* both because a verse ending in *that* is followed by one ending in *quite*, and because '*that* also begins the next I doubt whether you will be satisfied with the first verse I have marked in the third book,—

[217] From that placid aspect and meek regard

Landor The trochee in "*placid* ' is feeble there and '*meek regard* conveys no new idea to "*placid aspect* Presently we come to—

[335] Mules after these camels and dromedaries
And wagons fraught with utensils of war

And here, if you could find any pleasure in a triumph over the petulance and frowardness of a weak adversary you might laugh at poor Hallam who cites the following as among the noble passages of Milton —

[337] Such forces met not *o v l a mp*
When Agrican with all h northern powers
Besieged Albracca *m s t*
The city of Gallafron from whence to win
Th fa t f he x A gel

Southey How very like Addison when his milk was turned to whey! I wish I could believe that the applauders of this poem were sincere since it is impossible to think them judicious their quotations and especially Hallam's having been selected from several of the weakest parts when better were close before them but we have strong evidence that the opinion was given in the spirit of contradiction and from the habit of hostility to what is eminent I would be charitable Hallam may have hit upon the place by hazard he may have been in the situation of a young candidate for preferment in the church who was recommended to the Chancellor Thurlow After much contemptuousness and ferocity the chancellor throwing open on the table his *Book of Livings* commanded him to choose for himself The young man modestly and timidly thanked him for his goodness and entreated his lordship to exercise his own discretion With a volley of oaths of which he was at all times prodigal, but more especially in the presence of a clergyman, he cried aloud "Put this pen sir, at the side of one or other Hesitation was now impossible The candidate placed it without looking where it happened to be at a benefice of small value Thurlow slapped his hand upon the table, and roared, "By God! you were within an ace of the best living in my gift!

Landor Hear the end —

> His daughter sought by many prowest knights
> Both Paynim and the peers of Charlemagne

Southey It would be difficult to extract, even from this poem, so many schoolboy's verses together The preceding,

which also are verbose are much more spirited and the illustration of one force by the display of another and which the poet tells us is less exhibits but small discrimination in the critic who extols it To praise a fault is worse than to commit one I know not whether any such critic has pointed out for admiration the "*glass of telescope* by which the Tempter might have shown Rome to our Saviour, verse 42, Book IV But we must not pass over lines nearer the commencement verse 10 —

> But as a man who had been matchless held
> In cunning, *over* *match'd* where least he thought
> To salve his credit and for very spite
> Still will be tempting him who foils him still

This is no simile no illustration but exactly what Satan had been doing

Landor The Devil grows very dry in the desert where he discourses—

[278] Of Academe old and new with those
Stagg'rd Peripatetics and the Sect
Epicurean and the Stoic severe

Southey It is piteous to find the simplicity of the gospel overlaid and deformed by the scholastic argumentation of our Saviour and by the pleasure he appears to take in holding a long conversation with the adversary —

> Not therefore am I *shy*
> Of knowing what I *say* He who receives
> Light from above from the fountain of light

What a verse, verse 287 &c ! A dissertation from our Saviour delivered to the Devil in the manner our poet has delivered it was the only thing wanting to his punishment and he catches it at last Verse 397 —

> Darkness now *rose*
> As daylight sunk and brought in *lowering* night
> Her shadowy offspring

This is equally bad poetry and bad philosophy the darkness *rising* and bringing in the night *lowering* when he adds —

Unsubstantial both
Privation mere of light— *d b t d /*

How? Privation of its absence! He wipes away with a single stroke of the brush two very indistinct and ill-drawn figures

Landor

Our Saviour meek an l vith *nt o bl d* mind
After his airy *j nt* tho *h rt d r*

How *hurried* sore if with *untroubled* mind?

Hungry and cold betook him to his rest

I should have been quite satisfied with a quarter of this.

Darkness now rose
Our Saviour meek betook him to his rest

Such simplicity would be the more grateful and the more effective in preceding that part of *Paradise Regained* which is the most sublimely pathetic It would be idle to remark the propriety of accentuation of *concourse*, and almost as idle to notice that in verse 420 is—

Thou only *to d t* unshaken

and in verse 425 —

Thou *at t* unappalled

But to *stand* as I said before, is to *remain* or to *be* in Milton, following the Italian Never was the eloquence of poetry so set forth by words and numbers in any language as in this period Pardon the *infernal* and *hellish*

Infernal ghosts and hellish furies round
Environ d thee some howl d some yell d some shriekt
Some bent at thee their fiery darts *hil th*
Sat t app lled t alm and l s p a

The idea of *sitting* is in itself more beautiful than of standing or lying down, but our Saviour is represented as lying down, while,—

The tempter watcht and soon with ugly dreams
Disturbed his sleep

He could disturb but not appall him as he himself says in verse 487

Southey It is thought by Joseph Warton and some others that where the Devil says —

[500] Ih i hear O Son of David virgin born
For Son of God to me is yet in doubt &c

—he speaks sarcastically in the word *virgin* born But the Devil is not so bad a rhetorician as to turn round so suddenly from the ironical to the serious He acknowledges the miracle of the nativity he pretends to doubt its divinity

[541] So saying he caught him up and *th t*
Of h pp g f bore through th r sublime

Satan had given good proof that his wing was more than a match for a hippogriff and if he had borrowed a hippogriff for the occasion he could have made no use of it unless he had borrowed the hippogriff too, and rode before or behind on him —

Ov the wilderness—and the plain

Two better verses follow but the temple of Jerusalem could never have appeared —

Topt with gol l *p*

[581] So Satan fell and traight a fiery globe
Of angels on full sail of wing flew nigh
Who on their plumy vans received *h m ft*

He means our Saviour not Satan In any ancient we should manage a little the *ductus literarum* and for the wretched words "*him soft* propose to substitute *their lord* But by what ingenuity can we elect into a verse verse 597 ?

In the bosom of bliss and light of light

In verses 613 and 614 we find rhyme

Landor The angels seem to have lost their voices since they left Paradise Their denunciations against Satan are very angry but very weak —

[629] Thee and thy legions yelling they shall fly
A d l g to h d th m a h d f u
Lest he command th m down into the deep
Bound and to torment ent before their time

Surely they had been tormented long before

The close of the poem is extremely languid however much it has been commended for its simplicity

Southey

He unobserved
H me to his *m th r* house *pr t* return'd

Unobserved and *private home* and his *moth r s house* are not very distinctive

Landor Milton took but little time in forming the plan of his *Paradise Regained*, doubtful and hesitating as he had been in the construction of *Paradise Lost* In composing a poem or any other work of imagination although it may be well and proper to lay down a plan, I doubt whether any author of any durable work has confined himself to it very strictly But writers will no more tell you whether they do or not than they will bring out before you the foul copies, or than painters will admit you into the secret of composing or of laying on their colors I confess to you that a few detached thoughts and images have always been the beginnings of my works Narrow slips have risen up, more or fewer above the surface These gradually became larger and more consolidated, freshness and verdure first covered one part, then another then plants of firmer and of higher growth, however scantily took their places, then extended their roots and branches, and among them and round about them in a little while you yourself, and as many more as I desired found places for study and for recreation

Returning to *Paradise Regained* If a loop in the netting of a purse is let down, it loses the money that is in it so a poem by laxity drops the weight of its contents In the animal body, not only nerves and juices are necessary but also continuity and cohesion Milton is caught sleeping after his exertions in *Paradise Lost*, and the lock of his strength is shorn off but here and there a prominent muscle swells out from the vast mass of the collapsed.

Southey The *Samson Agonistes* now before us, is less lan

guid, but it may be charged with almost the heaviest fault of a poem or indeed of any composition, particularly the dramatic which is there is insufficient coherency or dependence of part on part Let us not complain that while we look at Samson and hear his voice we are forced to think of Milton, of his blindness of his abandonment, with as deep a commiseration If we lay open the few faults covered by his transcendent excellences we feel confident that none are more willing (or would be more acceptable were he present) to pay him homage I retain all my admiration of his poetry you all yours not only of his poetry but of his sentiments on many grave subjects

Landor I do, but I should be reluctant to see disturbed the order and course of things, by alterations at present unnecessary or by attempts at what might be impracticable When an evil can no longer be borne manfully and honestly and decorously then down with it and put something better in its place Meanwhile guard strenuously against such evil The vigilant will seldom be constrained to vengeance

Southey Simple as is the plan of this drama, there are prettinesses in it which would be far from ornamental anywhere Milton is much more exuberant in them than Ovid himself who certainly would never have been so commended by Quintilian for the *Media*, had he written—

7 Where I a prisoner chain'd scarce freely draw
The air imprisoned also

But into what sublimity he soon ascends!

[40] Ask for this great deliverer now and find him
Eyeless in Gaza at the mill with slaves

Landor My copy is printed as you read it but there ought to be commas after *eyeless* after *Gaza*, and after *mill* Generally our printers or writers put three commas where one would do but here the grief of Samson is aggravated at every member of the sentence Surely it must have been the resolution of Milton to render his choruses as inharmonious as he fancied the Greek were, or would be, without the accompaniments of instruments, accentuation, and chants Otherwise how can we account for 'abandoned,[6] and by *himself given over in slavish habit, ill fitted weeds*

[6 Line 120 Globe ed]

over worn and soiled Or do my eyes misrepresent? Can this be he, that heroic that renowned irresistible Samson?

Southey We are soon compensated, regretting only that the *chorus* talks of '*Chalybean* tempered steel' in the beginning and then informs us of his exploit with the jaw bone —

[145] In Ramath lehi *jam* [illegible] *tibi dare*

It would be strange indeed if such a victory as was never won before were forgotten in twenty years or thereabout

Southey Passing Milton's oversights, we next notice his systematic defects Fondness for Euripides made him too didactic when action was required Perhaps the French drama kept him in countenance although he seems to have paid little attention to it comparatively

Landor The French drama contains some of the finest didactic poetry in the world and is peculiarly adapted both to direct the reason and to control the passions It is a well lighted saloon of graceful eloquence where the sword knot is appended by the hand of Beauty, and where the snuff-box is composed of such brilliants as after a peace or treaty kings bestow on diplomatists. Whenever I read a French Alexdrine I fancy I receive a box on the ear in the middle of it and another at the end, sufficient if not to pain to weary me intolerably and to make the book drop out of my hand Molière and La Fontaine can alone by their homœopathy revive me Such is the power of united wit and wisdom in ages the most desperate! These men, with Montaigne and Charron will survive existing customs, and probably existing creeds Millions will be captivated by them when the eloquence of Bossuet himself shall interest extremely few Yet the charms of language are less liable to be dissipated by time than the sentences of wisdom While the incondite volumes of more profound philosophers are no longer in existence, scarcely one of writers who enjoyed in a high degree the gift of eloquence is altogether lost. Among the Athenians there are indeed some, but in general they were worthless men, squabbling on worthless matters we have little to regret excepting of Phocion and of Pericles If we turn to Rome, we retain all the best of Cicero, and we patiently and almost indifferently hear that nothing is to be found of Marcus Antonius or

Hortensius for the eloquence of the bar is and ought always to be secondary

Southey You were remarking that our poet paid little attention to the French drama Indeed, in his preface he takes no notice of it whatsoever —not even as regards the plot in which consists its chief excellence or perhaps I should say rather its superiority He holds the opinion that 'A plot, whether intricate or explicit is nothing but such economy or disposition of the fable as may stand best with verisimilitude and decorum Surely the French tragedians have observed this doctrine attentively

Landor It has rarely happened that dramatic events have followed one another in their natural order The most remarkable instance of it is in the *King Œdipus* of Sophocles But Racine is in general the most skilful of the tragedians with little energy and less invention I wish Milton had abstained from calling Æschylus Sophocles and Euripides the three tragic poets unequalled *yet* by any because it may leave a suspicion that he fancied he essentially undramatic could equal them, and had now done it and because it exhibits him as a detractor from Shakspeare I am as sorry to find him in this condition as I should have been to find him in a fit of the gout, or treading on a nail with naked foot in his blindness

Southey Unfortunately it is impossible to exculpate him for you must have remarked where, a few sentences above are these expressions 'This is mentioned to vindicate from the *small esteem or rather infamy* which in the account of many it undergoes at this day, with other common interludes happening through the poet's error of intermixing *comick stuff with tragick sadness and gravity* or intermixing trivial and vulgar persons which, by all judicious, hath been counted absurd, and brought in without discretion corruptly to gratify the people

Landor It may be questioned whether the people in the reign of Elizabeth or indeed the queen herself would have been contented with a drama without a smack of the indecent or the ludicrous. They had alike been accustomed to scenes of ribaldry and of bloodshed and the palace opened on one wing to the brothel, on the other to the shambles The clowns of Shakspeare are still admired by not the vulgar only

Southey The more the pity Let them appear in their proper places But a picture by Morland or Frank Hals ought never to break a series of frescoes by the hand of Raphael, or of senatorial portraits animated by the sun of Titian There is much to be regretted in, and (since we are alone I will say it) a little which might without loss or injury be rejected from, the treasury of Shakspeare

Landor It is difficult to sweep away any thing and not to sweep away gold dust with it but viler dust lies thick in some places The grave Milton, too has cobwebs hanging on his workshop, which a high broom, in a steady hand may reach without doing mischief But let children and short men and unwary ones stand out of the way

Southey Necessary warning! for nothing else occasions so general satisfaction is the triumph of a weak mind over a stronger And this often happens for the sutures of a giant's armor are most penetrable from below Surely no poet is so deeply pathetic as the one before us and nowhere more than in those verses which begin at the sixtieth and end with the eighty fifth There is much fine poetry after this and perhaps the prolixity is very rational in a man so afflicted but the composition is the worse for it Samson could have known nothing of the *interlunar cave* nor could he ever have thought about the light of the soul and of the soul being *all in every part*

Landor Reminiscences of many sad afflictions have already burst upon the poet, but, instead of overwhelming him, they have endued him with redoubled might and majesty Verses worthier of a sovereign poet, sentiments worthier of a pure, indomitable, inflexible republican never issued from the human heart than these referring to the army in the last effort made to rescue the English nation from disgrace and servitude —

[265] Had Judah that day joined or one whole tribe
They had by this possest the towers of Gath
And lorded over them whom now they serve
But what more oft in nations grown corrupt
And by their vices brought to servitude
Than to love bondage more than liberty
Bondage with ease than strenuous liberty
And to despise or envy or suspect
Whom God hath of his special favor rais'd

As their deliverer? If he aught begin
How frequent to desert him! and at last
To heap ingratitude on worthiest deeds!

Southey I shall be sorry to damp your enthusiasm in however slight a degree by pursuing our original plan in the detection of blemishes Eyes the least clear sighted could easily perceive one in—

297 For of such doctrine never was there school
But the heart of the fool
And no man therein doctor but himself

They could discern here nothing but the quaint conceit and it never occurred to them that the chorus knew nothing of schools and doctors A line above there is an expression not English For who believe not the existence of God, —

295 Who *th k* not God at all

And is it captious to say that when Manoah's locks are called 'white as down, whiteness is no characteristic of down? Perhaps you will be propitiated by the number of words in our days equally accented on the first syllable, which in this drama the great poet with all his authority has stamped on the second such as *impulse educt contrary prescript* the substantive *contest instinct crystalline pretext*

Landor I wish we had preserved them all in that good condition, excepting the substantive *contest* which ought to follow the lead of *conquest* But 'now we have got to the worst let us keep to the worst' is the sound conservative maxim of the day

Southey I perceive you adhere to your doctrine in the termination of Aristo*teles*

Landor If we were to say Aris*totle*, why not Themis*tocle* Empe*docle* and Peri*cle*? Here too *neath* has always a mark of elision before it, quite unnecessarily From *neath* comes *nether* which reminds me that it would be better spelled as it was formerly *nethe*

But go on we can do no good yet.

Southey

341 That *n n bl* Samson far renowned

Here, unless we place the accent on the third syllable the verse assumes another form, and such as is used only in the ludicrous or light poetry scann d thus —

That in | cible Sam | son &c

There is great eloquence and pathos in the speech of Manoah but the *scorpion s tail behind* in verse 360 is inapposite Perhaps my remark is unworthy of your notice but as you are reading on you seem to ponder on something which is worthy

Landor How very much would literature have lost if this marvellously great and admirable man had omitted the various references to himself and his contemporaries! He had grown calmer at the close of life and saw in Cromwell as a fault what he had seen before as a necessity or a virtue The indignities offered to the sepulchre and remains of the greatest of English sovereigns, by the most ignominious made the tears of Milton gush from his darkened eyes and extorted from his generous and grateful heart this exclamation —

[368] Alas! methinks when God hath chosen one
To worthiest deed if he through frailty err
He should not so o erwhelm and a thrall
Subject him to so foul indignities
Be it but for honor s sake of former deeds

How supremely grand is the close of Samson s speech!

Southey In verse 439, we know what is meant by—

Slewst them many a slain

But the expression is absurd he could not slay the slain We also may object to—

[553] Use of strongest wine
And strongest drinks

knowing that wines were the strongest drinks in those times perhaps they might have been made stronger by the infusion of herbs and spices You will again be saddened by the deep harmony of those verses in which the poet represents his own condition. Verse 590 —

All otherwise to me my thoughts portend, &c

In verses 729 and 731 the words *address* and *addrest* are in elegant —

> And words *address* seem into tears dissolved
> Wetting the borders of her silken veil
> But now again she *addrest* to speak

In verse 734 —

> Which to have merited without excuse
> I cannot but acknowledge

—the comma should be expunged after *excuse*, else the sentence is ambiguous And in 745 what *amends* is in my power We have no singular as the French have for this word although many use it ignorantly as Milton does inadvertently

934 Thy *false* enchanted cup and warbling charms

Here we are forced by the double allusion to recognise the later mythos of Circe The cup alone or the warbling alone might belong to any other enchantress —any of his own or of a preceding age —since we know that in all times certain herbs and certain incantations were used by sorceresses

The chorus in this tragedy is not always conciliating and assuaging Never was anything more bitter against the female sex than the verses from 1010 to 1060 The invectives of Euripides are never the outpourings of the chorus and their venom is cold as hemlock those of Milton are hot and corrosive —

> It is not virtue wisdom valor wit
> *Strength* or *all* *force* *help* *might* *matter* *out*
> That woman's love *can* *win* or *long* *inherit*
> But what it is is hard to say
> *Harder* *than* *hit*
> Which way soever men refer it
> Much like thy riddle Samson in one day
> Or seven *though* *one* *should* *musing* *get*

Never has Milton in poetry or prose, written worse than this The beginning of the second line is untrue the conclusion is tautological In the third it is needless to inform us that what is not to be gained is not to be inherited or in the fourth that what is hard to *say* is hard to *hit* but it really is a new discovery that it is harder Where is the distinction in the idea he would present

of *saying* and *hitting*? However we will not "musing sit" on these dry thorns

[1034] Whate er it be to wisest men and best
Seeming at first all heavenly under virgin veil &

This is a very ugly misshapen Alexandrine The verse would be better and more regular by the omission of '*seeming*' or at first neither of which is necessary

Landor The giant Harapha is not expected to talk wisely, but he never would have said to Samson —

1081 Thou knowest me now
If thou t all a t kn w much I have heard
Of thy prodigious strength

A pretty clear evidence of his being somewhat known

[1133] And black enchantments some magician's art

No doubt of that. But what glorious lines from 1167 to 1179! I cannot say so much of these —

[1323] Have they not sword players and every sort
Of gymnic artists wrestler riders runners
Jugglers and dancers antics mummers mimics?

No, certainly not the jugglers and the dancers they probably had but none of the rest *Mummers* are said to derive their appellation from the word *mum* I rather think *mum*? came corrupted from them *Mummer* in reality is *mime* We know how frequently the letter *r* has obtained an undue place at the end of words The English mummers were men who acted, without speaking, in coarse pantomime There are many things which I have marked between this place and verse 1665

1634 That to the arched roof gave main support

There were no arches in the time of Samson, but the mention of the two pillars in the centre makes it requisite to imagine such a structure Verse 1660,—

O dearly bought revenge yet glorious

It is Milton's practice to make vowels syllabically weak either

coalesce with or yield to others. In no place but at the end of a verse would he pronounce *glorious* into a trisyllable The structure of his versification was founded on the Italian in which *io* and *ia* in some words are monosyllables in all places but the last Verse 1664 —

> Among thy slain self killd
> Not willingly but tangled in the fold
> Of dire necessity who e law in death conjoined
> Thee with thy slaughtered foe in number more
> Than all thy life hath slain befor

Milton differs extremely from the Athenian dramatists in neglecting the beauty of his choruses Here the third line is among his usually bad Alexandrines and there is not only a debility of rhythm but also a redundancy of words The verse would be better and the sense too without the words "*in death* And '*slaughtered* is alike unnecessary in the next Farther on, the chorus talks about the phœnix Now the phœnix although Oriental was placed in the Orient by the Greeks If the phœnix *no second knows* it is probable it knows *no third* All this nonsense is prated while Samson is lying dead before them But the poem is a noble poem and the characters of Samson and Delilah are drawn with precision and truth The Athenian dramatists both tragic and comic, have always one chief personage one central light Homer has not in the *Iliad* nor has Milton in the *Paradise Lost* nor has Shakspeare in several of his best tragedies We find it in Racine in the great Corneille, in the greater Schiller In Calderon and the other dramatists of Spain it rarely is wanting but their principal delight is in what we call plot or intrigue,—in plainer English (and very like it) intricacy and trick Hurd after saying of the *Samson Agonistes* that "it is, as might be expected a masterpiece tucks up his lawn sleeve and displays his slender wrist against Lowth Nothing was ever equal to his cool effrontery when he says, This critic, *and all such* are greatly *out in* their judgments" &c He might have profited, both in criticism and in style by reading Lowth more attentively and patiently In which case he never would have written *out in*, nor *obliged to such freedoms* nor twenty more

such strange things Lowth was against the chorus Hurd says, It will be constantly wanting to rectify the wrong conclusions of the audience Would it not be quite as advisable to drop carefully a few drops of laudanum on a lump of sugar to lull the excitement of the sufferers by the tragedy? The chorus in Milton comes well provided with this narcotic Voltaire wrote an *opera* and intended it for a serious one on the same subject He decorated it with choruses sung to Venus and Adonis and represented Samson more gallantly French than either He pulled down the temple on the stage and cried —

J ai réparé ma honte et j exp re en vainqueur!

And yet Voltaire was often a graceful poet and sometimes a judicious critic It may be vain and useless to propose for imitation the chief excellences of a great author, such being the gift of transcendent genius and not an acquisition to be obtained by study or labor but it is only in great authors that defects are memorable when pointed out and unsuspected until they are distinctly For which reason I think it probable that at no distant time I may publish your remarks if you consent to it

Southey It is well known in what spirit I made them, and as you have objected to few if any I leave them at your discretion Let us now pass on to *Lycidas* It appears to me that Warton is less judicious than usual in his censure of—

[5] Shatter your leaves before the mellowing year

I find in his note The *mellowing* year could not affect the leaves of the laurel the myrtle, and the ivy which last is characterized before as *never sere* The ivy sheds its leaves in the proper season though never all at once, and several hang on the stem longer than a year In verse 89,—

But now my oat proceeds
And listens to the herald of the sea

Does the oat listen?

119 Blind mouths that scarce themselves know how to hold
A sheep hook

Now although mouths and bellies may designate the possessors or bearers yet surely the *blind mouth* holding a shepherd's crook is a fitter representation of the shepherd's dog than of the shepherd Verse 145 may he not have written the *gloming* violet — not indeed well, but better than *glowing*?

154 Ay me! while thee the *l* and sounding seas
Wash far away

Surely the *shores* did not

[176] And hears the *xpr* *v* nuptial song
In the blest kingdom *m* *t* of joy and love

What can be the meaning?

Landor It is to be regretted not so much that Milton has adopted the language and scenery and mythology of the ancients, as that he confounds the real simple field shepherds with the mitred shepherds of St Paul's Churchyard and Westminster Abbey and ties the two-handed sword against the crook I have less objection to the luxury spread out before me than to be treated with goose and mince pie on the same plate

No poetry so harmonious had ever been written in our language but in the same free metre both Tasso and Guarini had captivated the ear of Italy In regard to poetry the *Lycidas* will hardly bear a comparison with the *Allegro* and *Penseroso* Many of the ideas in both are taken from Beaumont and Fletcher from Raleigh and Marlowe and from a poem in the first edition of Burton's *Melancholy* Each of these has many beauties but there are couplets in Milton's worth them all We must however do what we set about If we see the faun walk lamely we must look at his foot find the thorn and extract it

Southey There are those who defend in the first verses the matrimonial or other less legitimate alliance of *Cerberus* and *Midnight* but I have too much regard for *Melancholy* to subscribe to the filiation, especially as it might exclude her presently from the nunnery, whither she is invited as *pensive devout* and *pure* The union of Erebus and Night is much spoken of in poetical circles and we have authority for announcing it to the public but *Midnight* like *Cerberus*, is a misnomer We have occasionally heard in objurgation, a man called a son of a dog, on the

mother's side but never was there goddess of that parentage. You are pleased to find Milton writing *pincht* instead of *pinched*

Landor Certainly for there never existed the word pinch*ed* and never can exist the word pinch*'d* In the same verse he writes *sed* for *said* We have both of these and we should keep them diligently The pronunciation is always *sed* excepting in rhyme For the same reason, we should retain *agen* as well as *again*

What a cloud of absurdities has been whiffed against me by no unlearned men, about the *Conversation* of Tooke and Johnson! Their own petty conceits rise up between their eyes and the volume they are negligently reading and utterly obscure or confound it irretrievably, One would represent me as attempting to undermine our native tongue another as modernizing it a third as antiquating it. Whereas I am trying to underprop, not to undermine I am trying to stop the man milliner at his ungainly work of trimming and flouncing I am trying to show how graceful is our English, not in its stiff decrepitude, not in its riotous luxuriance, but in its hale mid-life I would make bad writers follow good ones and good writers accord with themselves If all cannot be reduced into order, is that any reason why nothing should be done toward it? If languages and men too are imperfect, must we never make an effort to bring them a few steps nearer to what is preferable? If we find on the road a man who has fallen from his horse and who has three bones dislocated, must we refuse him our aid because one is quite broken? It is by people who answer in the affirmative to these questions, or seem to answer so —it is by such writers that our language for the last half century has fallen more rapidly into corruption and decomposition than any other ever spoken among men The worst losses are not always those which are soonest felt, but those which are felt too late

Southey I should have adopted all your suggestions in orthography if I were not certain that my bookseller would protest against it as ruinous If you go no farther than to write *compell* and *foretell*, the compositor will correct your oversight yet surely there should be some sign that the last syllable of those verbs ought to be spelled differently as they are pronounced differently, [illegible] *shrivel* and *level*

Landor Let us run back to our plantain But a bishop

stands in the way —a bishop no other than Hurd, who says that 'Milton shows his judgment in celebrating Shakspeare's comedies rather than his tragedies Pity he did not live earlier'—he would have served among the mummers both for bishop and fool We now come to the *Penseroso* in which title there are many who doubt the propriety of the spelling Marsand in editor of Petrarca has defended the poet who used equally *pensiero* and *pinsero* The mode is more peculiarly Lombard The Milanese and Comasces invariably say *pinser* Yet it is wonderful how at so short a distance and professing to speak the same language they differ in many expressions The wonder ceases with those who have resided long in the country and are curious about such matters when they discover that at two gates of Milan two languages are spoken The same thing occurs in Florence itself where a street is inhabited by the Camaldolese whose language is as little understood by learned academicians as that of Dante himself Beyond the eastern gates a morning's walk you come into Vallungo a pastoral district in which the people speak differently from both I have always found a great pleasure in collecting the leaves and roots of these phonetic simples especially in hill countries Nothing so conciliates many and particularly the uneducated, as to ask and receive instruction from them I have not hesitated to collect it from swineherds and Fra Diavolo I should have looked for it in vain among universities and professors

Southey Turning back to the *Allegro* I find an amusing note conveying the surprising intelligence all the way from Oxford that *eglantine* means really the *dog rose* and that both dog rose and *honeysuckle* (for which Milton mistook it) 'are often growing against the sides *or walls* of a house Thus says Mr Thomas Warton I wish he had also told us in what quarter of the world a house has *sides* without *walls* of some kind or other But it really is strange that Milton should have misapplied the word at a time when botany was become the favorite study I do not recollect whether Cowley had yet written his Latin poems on the appearances and qualities of plants What are you smiling at?

Landor Our old field of battle, where Milton

Calls up him who left untold
The story of Cambuscan bold

Chaucer—like Shakspeare like Homer like Milton like every great poet that ever lived—derived from open sources the slender origin of his immortal works Imagination is not a mere workshop of images great and small as there are many who would represent it but sometimes *thoughts* also are imagined before they are felt, and descend from the brain into the bosom Young poets imagine feelings o which in reality they are strangers

Southey Copy them rather

Landor Not entirely The copybook acts on the imagination Unless they felt the truth or the verisimilitude it could not take possession of them But feelings and images fly from distant coverts into their little field, without their conscious ness whence they come, and rear young ones there which are properly their own Chatterton hath shown as much imagination, in the *Bristowe Tragedie* as in that animated allegory which begins,—

When Freedom dreste in blood staind veste

Keats is the most imaginative of our poets after Chaucer, Spenser Shakspeare and Milton

Southey I am glad you admit my favorite, Spenser

Landor He is my favorite too if you admit the expression without the signification of precedency I do not think him equal to Chaucer even in imagination and he appears to me very inferior to him in all other points excepting harmony Here the miscarriage is in Chaucer s age not in Chaucer, many of whose verses are highly beautiful but never (as in Spenser) one whole period I love the geniality of his tempera ture —no straining no effort, no storm, no fury His vivid thoughts burst their way to us through the coarsest integuments of language

The heart is the creator of the poetical world only the atmosphere is from the brain Do I then undervalue imagination? No indeed, but I find imagination where others never look for it,—in character multiform yet consistent. Chaucer first united the two glorious realms of Italy and England Shakspeare came after, and subjected the whole universe to his dominion But he mounted the highest steps of his throne under those bland

skies which had warmed the congenial breasts of Chaucer and Boccaccio

The powers of imagination are but slender when it can invent only shadowy appearances much greater are requisite to make an inert and insignificant atom grow up into greatness —to give it form life mobility, and intellect Spenser hath accomplished the one, Shakspeare and Chaucer the other Pope and Dryden have displayed a little of it in their *Satires* In passing let me express my wish that writers who compare them in generalities and who lean mostly toward the stronger would attempt to trim the balance by placing Pope among our best critics on poetry while Dryden is knee deep below John Dennis You do not like either I read both with pleasure so long as they keep to the couplet But *St Cecilia's* music book is interlined with epigrams and *Alexander's Feast* smells of gin at second hand, with true Briton fiddlers full of native *talent* in the orchestra

Southey Dryden says It were an easy matter to produce some *thousands* of Chaucer's verses *which* are lame for want of half and sometimes a whole foot *which* no pronunciation can make otherwise

Landor Certainly no pronunciation but the proper one can do it

Southey On the opposite quarter comparing him with Boccaccio he says He has refined on the Italian and has mended his stories in his way of telling Our countryman carries weight and yet wins the race at disadvantage

Landor Certainly our brisk and vigorous poet carries with him no weight in criticism

Southey Vivacity and shrewd sense are Dryden's characteristics with quickness of perception rather than accuracy of remark, and consequently facility rather than a fidelity of expression

We are coming to our last days if according to the prophet Joel, 'blood and fire and pillars of smoke are signs of them Again to Milton and the *Penseroso*

90 What worlds or what vast regions

Are not *vast regions* included in *world*? In verses 119 120, 121, 122, the same rhymes are repeated

Thus might oft see me in thy pale career

is the only verse of ten syllables and should be reduced to the ranks You always have strongly objected to epithets which designate dresses and decoration, of which epithets it must be acknowledged both Milton and Shakspeare are unreasonably fond *Cruisuted frowned kercheft* come close together I suspect they will find as little favor in your eyes as *embroidered, trimmed* and *gilded*

Landor I am fond of gilding not in our poetry but in our apartments where it gives a sunniness greatly wanted by the climate Pindar and Virgil are profuse of *gold* but they reject the *gilded*

Southey I have counted ninety three lines in Milton where *gold* is used and only four where *gilded* is A question is raised whether *pale*, in—

[156] To walk the studious cloisters *p l*

is substantive or adjective What is your opinion?

Landor That it is an adjective Milton was very Italian as you know in his custom of adding a second epithet after the substantive where one had preceded it The Wartons followed him Yet Thomas Warton would read in this verse the substantive, giving as his reason that our poet is fond of the singular In the present word here is nothing extraordinary in finding it thus We commonly say within the *pale* of the church, of the law &c But *pale* is an epithet to which Milton is very partial Just before he has written "*pale career* and we shall presently see the '*pale eyed priest*

Southey

With antick pillars massy proof

The Wartons are fond of repeating in their poetry the word *massy-proof*,—in my opinion an inelegant one, and if a compound, compounded badly It seems more applicable to castles whose *massiveness* gave *proof* of resistance *Antick* was probably spelled *antike* by the author who disdained to follow the fashion in *antique*, *Pindaricque* &c, affected by Cowley and others, who had been, or would be thought to have been, domiciliated with Charles II in France

Landor Whenever I come to the end of these poems, or

either of them it is always with a sigh of regret We will pass by the *Arcades* of which the little that is good is copied from Shakspeare

Southey Nevertheless we may consider it as a *nebula* which was not without its efficiency in forming the star of *Comus* This *Mask* is modelled on another by George Peele Two brothers wander in search of a sister enthralled by a magician They call aloud her name and echo repeats it as here in *Comus* Much has also been taken from Putcanus who borrowed at once the best and the worst of his poem from Philostratus In the third verse I find *spirits* a dissyllable, which is unusual in Milton

Landor I can account for his monosyllabic sound by his fondness of imitating the Italian *spirto* But you yourself are addicted to these quavers if you will permit me the use of the word here and I find *spirit peril* &c occupying no longer a time than if the second vowel were wanting I do not approve of the apposition in—

[38] The *d* [illegible] *l* of whose shady brows

Before which I find—

[21] Sea girt i le
That like to rich and arious g m inlay
Th *d* *d* bo om of tl de p

How can a bosom be *unadorned* which already is *inlaid* with gems?

Southey You will object no less strongly to—

[115] Sounds and sea with all their finny drove

sounds being parts of *seas*

Landor There are yet graver faults Where did the young lady ever hear or learn such expressions as Swilled insolence? [7]

[188] The *g ey-hooded Eve*
Like a sad votarist in *palm* *d*
Rose from the hindmost *wh l* of Phœbus wain

[7 Line 178 Globe ed.]

Here is Eve a manifest female with her own proper hood upon her head, taking the other parts of male nature and rising (by good luck) from under a wagon wheel But nothing in Milton, and scarcely any thing in Cowley is vile than—

[195] Else O thou night
Why should st thou but for some *fault* end
In thy *dark lap* thus clos'd up the stars

It must have been a capacious *dark lantern* that held them all

That Nature hung in heaven and fill'd their lamps
With everlasting oil

Hardly so bad but very bad is—

[21] Does a *sable* cloud
Turn forth her *silver lining* on the night?

A greater and more momentous fault is that three soliloquies come in succession for about 240 lines together

[291] What time the labored ox
In his loose traces from the furrow came
And the swinkt hedger at his supper sat

These are blamed by Warton, but blamed in the wrong place The young lady being in the wood could have seen nothing of ox or hedger and was unlikely to have made any previous observations on their work hours But, in the summer —and this was in summer,—neither the ox nor the hedger are at work That the ploughman always quits it at noon as Warton says he does, is untrue When he quits it at noon it is for his dinner Gray says —

The ploughman homeward plods his weary way

He may do that, but certainly not at the season when—

The beetle wheels her drony flight

Nevertheless, the stricture is captious for the ploughman may return from the field, although not from ploughing, and *ploughman* may be accepted for any agriculturist Certainly such must have been Virgil's meaning when he wrote—

Quo dura ... *a* ... *at*
Observans nido implumes detraxit

For ploughing in Italy more especially is never the labor in June when the nightingale's young are hatched Gray's verse is a good one, which is more than can be said of Virgil's

[230] Sweet Echo! sweetest nymph! that liv'st unseen
Within thy airy shell!

The habitation is better adapted to an oyster than to Echo We must, however go on and look after the young gentlemen Comus says —

[294] I saw them under a green mantling vine
Plucking ripe clusters &c

It is much to be regretted that the banks of the Severn in our days present no such facilities You would find some difficulty in teaching the readers of poetry to read metrically the exquisite verses which follow What would they make of—

[302] And[8] as I | past I | wor hipt it!

These are the true times and they are quite unintelligible to those who divide our verses into iambics with what they call *licences*

Southey We have found the two brothers and never were two young gentlemen in stiffer doublets

[301] *Unmoved* ye faint star &c

The elder although as smooth as Hebe's his unrazor'd lip talks not only like a man but like a philosopher of much experience,—

[362] What need a man forestall his date of grief &c

How should he know that –

[393] Beauty like the fair Hesperian tree
Laden with blooming gold had need the guard
Of dragon watch with unenchanted eye
To save her blossoms and defend her fruit &c ?

[8 Line 301 reads

I was awe strook
And as I passed I wor hipped If those you seek
It were a journey like the path to Heaven
To help you find them]

Landor We now come to a place where we have only the choice of a contradiction or nonsense —

[378] She *plumes* her feathers and lets grow her wings

There is no sense in *pluming* a plume Beyond a doubt, Milton wrote *prunes* and subsequently it was printed *plumes* to avoid what appeared a contrariety And a contrariety it would be if the word *prune* were to be taken in no other sense than the gardener's We suppose it must mean to *cut shorter* but its real signification is to *trim* which is usually done by that process Milton here means to *smoothen* and *put in order* *prune* is better Among the strange unaccountable expressions which within our memory or a little earlier, were carried down like shingles by a sudden torrent over our language, can you tell me what writer first wrote '*un bidden tears*'?

Southey No indeed The phrase is certainly a curiosity although no rarity I wish some logician or (it being beyond the reach of any) some metaphysician would attempt to render us an account of it Milton has never used *unbidden* where it really would be significant and only once *unbid* Can you go forward with this 'Elder brother'?

Landor Let us try I wish he would turn off his liveried angels' verse 455 and would say nothing about lust How could he have learned that lust—

[464] By unchaste looks loose gestures and foul talk
But most by lewd and lavish act of sin &c ?

Can you tell me what wolves are *stabled* wolves verse 534?

Southey Not exactly But here is another verse of the same construction as you remarked before —

[599] And earth base built on stubble But come let on

This was done by choice, not by necessity He might have omitted the *But* and have satisfied the herd bovine and porcine Just below are two others in which three syllables are included in the time of two

[602] But for that damn'd magician let him be gart &c

605 Harpies and hydras or all the monstrous forms &c

And again—

615 And crumble all thy sinews Why prithee shepherd

Landor You have crept unsoiled from—

[604] Under the *ly* flag of Acheron

And you may add many dozens more of similar verses if you think it worth your while to go back for them In verse 610 I find yet redundant —

I lo e thy courage *y t* and bold empr se

Commentators and critics bogle sadly a little further on —

[632] But in another country a h aid
Bore a bright golden fl w r *but* not in this soil

On which hem T Warton Milton notwithstanding his singular skill in music appears to have had a very bad ear Warton was celebrated in his time for his great ability in raising a laugh in the common room He has here shown a capacity more extensive in that faculty Two or three honest men have run to Milton's assistance and have applied a remedy to his ear they would help him to mend the verse In fact it is a bad one he never wrote it so The word *but* is useless in the second line and comes with the worse grace after the *But* in the preceding They who can discover faults in versification where there are none but of their own imagining have failed to notice verse 666 —

Why ar you | vext lady | why do you | frown?

Now this in reality is inadmissible being of a metre quite different from the rest It is dactylic and consequently ill though the number of syllables is just, the number of feet is defective But Milton, in reciting it would bring it back to the order he had established He would read it—

Why *are* you vext?

And then in a faltering and falling accent and in the tender trochee,—

Lady | why do you frown?

There are some who in a few years can learn all the harmony of Milton there are others who must go into another state of existence for this felicity

Southey I am afraid I am about to check for a moment your enthusiasm in bringing you—

[707] To those budge *d r* of the Stoic *f*

whom Comus is holding in derision

Landor Certainly it is odd enough to find him in such company It is the first time either Cynic or Stoic ever put on fur, and it must be confessed it little becomes them We are told that verse 727 —

And live like Nature's bastards not her sons

— is taken from the Bible Whencesoever it may be taken, the expression is faulty for a son may be a bastard and quite as surely a bastard may be a son In verse 732 "the unsought diamonds are ill placed and we are told that Doctors Warburton and Newton called these four lines exceeding childish They are so for all that I wonder none of the fraternity had his fingers at liberty to count the syllables in verse 43 —

If you let | slip time like a neglected rose &c

I wish he had cast away the *yet* in verse 755

Think what and be advised you are but young yet

Not only is *yet* an expletive and makes the verse inharmonious, but the syllables *young* and *yet* coming together would of themselves be intolerable anywhere What a magnificent passage! How little poetry in any language is comparable to this, which closes the lady's reply —

792 799 Thou art not fit to hear thyself convinced!

This is worthy of Shakspeare himself in his highest mood, and is unattained and unattainable by any other poet What a transport of enthusiasm what a burst of harmony! He who writes one sentence equal to this will have reached a higher rank in poetry than any has done since this was written

Southey I thought it would be difficult to confine you to censure, as we first proposed The anger and wit of Comus effervesce into flatness one dashed upon the other

[806] Come no more
This is mere moral babble and direct
Ag th nl w f f lt

He rolls out from the cynic tub to put on cap and gown The laughter of Milton soon assumed a wry puritanical cast Even while he had the *molle* he wanted the *facetum* in all its parts and qualities It is hard upon Milton and harder still upon inferior poets that every expression of his used by a predecessor should be noted as borrowed or stolen Here, in verse 812 —

Will bathe the drooping spirit in delight

is traced to several and might be traced to more Chaucer in whose songs it is more beautiful than elsewhere writes —

His harte bathed in a bath of blis

Probably he took the idea from the bath of knights You could never have seen Chaucer, nor the best when you wrote those verses at Rugby[9] on Godiva you drew them out of the *Square Pool* and assimilated them to the tranquillity of prayer,—such a tranquillity as is the effect of prayer on the boyish mind when it has any effect at all

Landor I have expunged many thoughts for their close resemblance to what others had written whose works I never saw until after But all thinking men must think all imaginative men must imagine many things in common although they differ Some abhor what others embrace but the thought strikes them equally With some an idea is productive with others it lies inert I have resigned and abandoned many things because I unreasonably doubted my legitimate claim to them, and many more because I believed I had enough substance in the house without them and that the retention might raise a clamor in my court yard I do not look very sharply after the poachers on my property One of your neighbors has broken down a shell in my

[9 See the Conversation between Leofric and Godiva vol v]

grotto and a town gentleman has lamed a rabbit in my warren heartily welcome both Do not shut your book we have time left for the rest

Southey Sabrina in person is now before us Johnson talks absurdly not on the long narration for which he has reasons, but in saying that it is of no use because it is false and therefore unsuitable to a good being Warton answers this objection with great propriety It may be added that things in themselves very false are very true in poetry and produce not only delight but beneficial moral effects This is an instance The part before us is copied from Fletcher's *Faithful Shepherdess* The Spirit in his thanksgiving to Sabrina for liberating the lady is extremely warm in good wishes After the aspiration —

[934] May thy lofty head be crown'd
With many a tower and terrace round

he adds,—

And here and there *thy bank p*
With groves of myrrh and cinnamon

It would have been more reasonable to have said —

And here and there some fine fat geese
And lucklings waiting for green pease

The conclusion is admirable though it must be acknowledged that the piece is undramatic Johnson makes an unanswerable objection to the prologue but he must have lost all the senses that are affected by poetry when he calls the whole drama *tediously instructive* There is, indeed here and there prolixity yet refreshing springs burst out profusely in every part of the wordy wilderness We are now at the *Sonnets* I know your dislike of this composition

Landor In English not in Italian but Milton has ennobled it in our tongue and has trivialized it in that He who is deficient in readiness of language is half a fool in writing, and more than half in conversation Ideas fix themselves about the tongue, and fall to the ground when they are in want of that support Unhappily, Italian poetry in the age of Milton was almost at its worst and he imitated what he heard repeated or praised It is better to say no more about it, or about his *Psalms*, when we come to them

Southey Among his minor poems several are worthless

Landor True but, if they had been lost we should be glad to have recovered them Cromwell would not allow Lely to omit or diminish a single wart upon his face yet there were many and great ones If you had found a treasure of gold and silver and afterwards in the same excavation an urn in which only brass coins were contained, would you reject them? You will find in his English *Sonnets* some of a much higher strain than even the best of Dante s The great poet is sometimes recumbent but never languid often unadorned —I wish I could honestly say not often inelegant But what noble odes (for such we must consider them) are the eighth the fifteenth the sixteenth the seventeenth and above all the eighteenth! There is a mild and serene sublimity in the nineteenth In the twentieth there is the festivity of Horace with a due observance of his precept, applicable metaphorically,—

Simplici myrto nihil adlabores

This is among the few English poems which are quite classical according to our notions as the Greeks and Romans have impressed them It is pleasing to find Milton in his later days thus disposed to cheerfulness and conviviality There are climates of the earth it is said in which a warm season intervenes between autumn and winter Such a season came to reanimate not the earth itself, but what was highest upon it

A few of Milton s *Sonnets* are extremely bad the rest are excellent Among all Shakspeare s not a single one is very admirable and few sink very low They are hot and pothery there is much condensation little delicacy like raspberry jam without cream without crust, without bread to break its viscidity But I would rather sit down to one of them again than to a string of such musty sausages as are exposed in our streets at the present dull season Let us be reverent but only where reverence is due, even in Milton and in Shakspeare It is a privilege to be near enough to them to see their faults never are we likely to abuse it Those in high station who have the folly and the impudence to look down on us, possess none such Silks perish as the silkworms have perished kings, as their carpets and canopies There are objects too great for these animalcules of

the palace to see well and wholly Do you doubt that the most fatuous of the Georges whichever it was thought himself Newton's superior Or that any minister any peer of Parliament held the philosopher so high as the assayer of the mint? Was it not always in a grated hole among bars and bullion that they saw whatever they could see of his dignity? Was it ever among the interminable worlds he brought down for men to contemplate? Yet Newton stood incalculably more exalted above the glorious multitude of stars and suns than these ignorant and irreclaimable wretches above the multitude of the street Let every man hold this faith and it will teach him what is lawful and right in veneration namely that there are divine beings and immortal men on the one side mortal men and brute beasts on the other The two parties stand compact, each stands separate the distance is wide but there is nothing in the interval

Will you go on after a minute or two for I am inclined to silence?

Southey Next to the *Sonnets* come the *Odes*, written much earlier One stanza in that *On the Morning of the Nativity* has been often admired What think you of this stanza the fourth? But the preceding and the following are beautiful too

Landor I think it incomparably the noblest piece of lyric poetry in any modern language I am conversant with and I regret that so much of the remainder throws up the bubbles and fetid mud of the Italian In the thirteenth, what a rhyme is *harmony* with *symphony*! In the eighteenth,—

Swinges the scaly horror of his *folded* tail

I wish you would unfold the folded tail for me I do not like to meddle with it

Southey Better to rest on the fourth stanza, and then regard fresh beauties in the preceding and the following Beyond these, very far beyond are the nineteenth and twentieth But why is the priest *pale-eyed*?

Landor Who knows? I would not delay you with a remark on the modern spelling of what Milton wrote *kist*, and what some editors have turned into *kiss'd* a word which could not exist in its contraction, and never did exist in speech

even uncontracted Yet they make *kiss'd* rhyme with *whist* Let me remark again on the word *unexpressive* verse 116 used before in *Lycidas* verse 176 and defended by the authority of Shakspeare (*As You Like It* Act III 82) —

The fair the haste thee he

This is quite as wrong as *resistless* for *irresistible* and even more so I suspect it was used by Shakspeare who uses it only once merely to turn into ridicule a fantastic *euphuism* of the day Milton in his youth was fond of seizing on odd things wherever he found them

Southey

130 And let the base of heaven deep organ blow

Landor No I will not I am too puritanical in poetry for that

Southey The twenty third 'And sullen Moloch is grand until we come to—

The brutish god of Nilus fast
Isis and Orus and the dog Anubis haste

As fast as what We have heard nothing but the ring of cymbals calling the grisly king We come to worse in twenty six,—

So when the sun bid
Curtain'd with cloudy red
Pillows his chin &c

[xxvii] And all about the tilyard
Bright'ning as they
Burnish'd angels sit in order serviceable

They would be the less *serviceable* by being seated and not the more so for being harnessed

The Passion —The five first verses of the sixth stanza are good and very acceptable after the 'letters where my tears have *washt a wannish white* The last two verses are guilty of such an offence as Cowley himself was never indicted for The sixth stanza lies between two others full of putrid conceits like a large pearl which has exhausted its oyster

Landor But can any thing be conceived more exquisite than—

Grove and spring
Would soon unbosom all their echoes mild?

This totally withdraws us from regarding the strange superfetation just below

The Circumcision verse 6 —

Now mourn and if ad *ha* with us to *b*

Death of an Infant —It is never at a time when the feelings are most acute that the poet expresses them but sensibility and taste shrink alike on such occasions from witticisms and whimsies Here are too many but the last two stanzas are very beautiful Look at the note Here are six verses four of them in Shakspeare containing specimens of the orthography you recommend —

Sweet Rose! fair flower untimely *pl kt* soon fade!
Pl lt n the bud and faded in the pring
Bright Orient p arle alack too timely hid d!
Fair creatur *k l d* too soon by Death s sharp sting

Again —

Sweete lovely Rose! ill *pl ckt* before thy time
Fair w rthy sonne not conquere! but *b t d*

Southey The spelling of Milton is not always to be copied though it is better on the whole than any other writer s He continues to write *fift* and *sixt* In what manner would he write *eighth* If he omitted the final *h*, there would be irregularity and confusion Beside how would he continue? Would he say the *tent* for the *tenth* and the *thirtent fourtent* &c?

Landor We have corrected and fixed a few inconsiderate and random spellings but we have as frequently taken the wrong and rejected the right No edition of Shakspeare can be valuable unless it strictly follows the first editors, who knew and observed his orthography

Southey

from thy prefixed seat didst *p t* —St 9 v 59

We find the same expression more than once in Milton —surely one very unfit for grave subjects in his time as in ours

Let us, sitting beneath the sundial look at the poem *On Time* —

Call on the lazy leaden stepping Hours
Whose speed is but the heavy plummet s pace

Now, although the Hours may be the lazier for the lead about them, the plummet is the quicker for it

And glut thyself with what thy womb devours

It is incredible how many disgusting images Milton indulges in

Landor In his age and a century earlier it was called strength The Graces are absent from this chamber of Hithyia But the poet would have defended his position with the *horse* of Virgil —

Ut mea armato militi complent

Southey

Their long-expectant bridal greet her bright
With an [illegible]

meaning *undivided* and he employs the same word in the same sense again in the *Paradise Lost* How much more properly than as we are now in the habit of using it calling men and women who never saw one another *individuals* and often employing it beyond the person for instance a man's *individual* pleasure although the pleasure is *divided* with another or with many The last put from When every thing to the end is magnificent The word *sincerely* bears its Latin signification

The next is *At a Solemn Music* And I think you will agree with me that a sequence of rhymes never ran into such harmony as those at the conclusion from That we on earth

Landor Excepting the commencement of Dryden's *Religio Laici* where indeed the poetry is of a much inferior order for the head of Dryden does not reach so high as to the loins of Milton

Southey No not to the knee We now come to the *Epitaph on the Marchioness of Winchester* He has often much injured this beautiful metre by the prefix of a syllable which distorts every foot The *entire* change in the *Allegro* to welcome Euphrosyne is admirably judicious The flow in the poem before us is trochaic he turns it into the iambic which is exactly its opposite The verses beginning—

The God that sits at marriage feast

are infinitely less beautiful than Ovid's These —

He at their inviting came,
But with a rarer well lighted flame

—bear a faint resemblance to—

Tax quoque quam tenuit lacrimosa stridula fumo
Usque fu t / j v t ot b ig

Here the conclusion is ludicrously low —

No marchioness but now a queen

In *Vacation Exercise*

Driving *d mb l* from the *p t l door*
Where he had *m t l, t* two year before

What do you think of that?

Landor Why I think it would have been as well if he had sat there still In the 27th verse, he uses the noun substantive *suspect* for *suspicion* and why not? I have already given my reasons for its propriety From verse 33 to 44 is again such a series of couplets as you will vainly look for in any other poet

Southey "*On the Ens* —Nothing can be more ingenious It was in such subjects that the royal James took delight I know not what the rivers have to do with the present but they are very refreshing after coming out of the schools

The Epitaph on Shakspeare is thought unworthy of Milton I entertain a very different opinion of it considering it was the first poem he ever published Omit the two lines —

Thou in our wonder and astonishment
Hast built thyself a live long monument

—and the remainder is vigorous direct, and enthusiastic after invention, the greatest qualities of all great poetry

On the Forces of Conscience —Milton is among the least witty of mankind He seldom attempts a witticism unless he is angry, and then he stifles it by clenching his fist His unrhymed translation of *Quis multa gracilis* is beautiful for four lines only

Plain in thy neatness is almost an equivoke *neat in thy plainness of attire* would be nearer the mark

Landor *Simplex munditiis* does not mean that nor *plain* in thy 'ornaments' as Warton thinks but, without any reference to ornaments plain in *attire* *Mundus muliebris* (and from *mundus muliebris*) means the toilet and always will mean it as long as the world lasts We now come upon the *Psalms* so let us close the book

Southey Willingly for I am desirous of hearing you say a little more about the Latin poetry of Milton than you have said in your *Dissertation*

Landor Johnson gives his opinion more freely than favorably It is wonderful that a critic so severe in his censures on the absurdities and extravagances of Cowley should prefer the very worst of them to the gracefulness and simplicity of Milton His gracefulness he seldom loses his simplicity he not always retains But there is no Latin verse of Cowley worth preservation Tho as May indeed is an admirable imitator of Lucan so poor a one, that if in Lucan you find little poetry in May you will find none But his verses sound well upon the anvil It is surprising that Milton who professedly imitated Ovid should so much more rarely have run into conceits than when he had no such leader His early English poetry is full of them, and in the gravest the most The best of his Latin poem is that addressed to Christina in the name of Cromwell it is worthy of the classical and courtly Bembo But in the second verse *lucida stella* violates the metre *stella serena* would be more descriptive and applicable It now occurs to me that he who edited the last *Ainsworth's Dictionary* calls Cowley *poetarum sæculi sui facile princeps* and totally omits all mention of Shakspeare in the obituary of illustrious men Among these he has placed not only the most contemptible critics who bore indeed some relation to learning but even such people as Lord Cornwallis and Lord Thurlow Egregious ass! above all other asses by a good ear's length! Ought a publication so negligent and injudicious to be admitted into our public schools the world has been enriched by the erudition of Faccio[illegible] Furlani? Shall we open the book again and go straight on

Southey If you please But as you insist on me saying most

about the English I expect at your hands a compensation in the Latin

Landor I do not promise you a compensation but I will waste no time in obeying your wishes Severe and rigid as the character of Milton has been usually represented to us it is impossible to read his *Elegies* without admiration for his warmth of friendship and his eloquence in expressing it His early love of Ovid as a master in poetry is enthusiastic

[3] Non tunc Ionio quidquam cessis et Homero
Nec foret victo laus tibi prima Maro!

Neve is often used by the moderns for *neque* very improperly Although we hear much about the *Metamorphoses* and the *Æneid* being left incomplete, we may reasonably doubt whether the authors could have much improved them There is a deficiency of skill in the composition of both poems but every part is elaborately worked out Nothing in Latin can excel the beauty of Virgil's versification Ovid's at one moment has the fluency at another the discontinuance of mere conversation Sorrow passionate dignified and deep is never seen in the *Metamorphoses* as in the *Æneid* nor in the *Æneid* is any eloquence so sustained any spirit so heroic as in the contest between Ajax and Ulysses But Ovid frequently in other places wants that gravity and potency in which Virgil rarely fails declamation is no substitute for it Milton in his Latin verses often places words beginning with *sc st sp*, &c before a dactyl, which is inadmissible

[53] Ah! quoties dignæ stupri miracula formæ
Quæ posset enium vel reparare Jo

No such difficult a matter as he appears to represent it for Jupiter, to the very last was much given to such reparations This elegy with many slight faults has great facility and spirit of its own, and has caught more by running at the side of Ovid and Tibullus In the second elegy *altpes* is a dactyl *pes*, simple or compound, is long This poem is altogether unworthy of its author The third is on the death of Launcelot Andrews Bishop of Winchester It is florid puerile, and altogether deficient in pathos The conclusion is curious —

Flebam turbatos Cepheleia pellice somnos
Tibi contingant omn ap mil

Ovid has expressed the same wish in the same words but the aspiration was for somewhat very dissimilar to a Bishop of Winchester The fourth is an epistle to Thomas Young his preceptor a man whose tenets were puritanical but who encouraged in his scholar the love of poetry Much of this piece is imitated from Ovid There are several thoughts which might have been omitted and several expressions which might have been improved For instance —

[111] Namque eris ille *Dei* radiante *sub* ipse *Flatus*
Ille tibi cultor *sacer* ille *tuis*

All the verses after these are magnificent The next is on Spring —very inferior to its predecessors

[39] Nam lucem tecum *sol* / *Summum* et *rectus* sit
Nec gratum eum *Deum* / *clus*

How thick the faults lie here! But the invitation of the Earth to the Sun is quite Ovidian

[122] Sinuque *fluctus* semideusque *capax*

is too much so Ely the sixth is addressed to Deodati

Mitto tibi *quam* non pleno venti *salutem*
Quam tu *dictato* / *carere* potes

I have often observed in modern Latinists of the first order that they use indifferently *forte* and *forsan* or *forsitan* Here is an example *Forte* is, *by accident* without the implication of a doubt *forsan* always implies one Martial wrote bad Latin when he wrote Si *forsan* Runchenius himself writes questionably to D Orville sed *forte* res non est tanti It surely would be better to have written *fortasse* I should have less wondered to find *forte* in any modern Italian (excepting Bembo who always writes with as much precision as Cicero or Cæsar) because *ma forse* their idiom would prompt *sed forte*

[19] Naso Corallaei mala carmina misit ab agri

Untrue He himself was discontented with them because they had lost their playfulness but their only fault lies in their adulation I doubt whether all the elegiac verses that have been written in the Latin language ever since are worth the books of

them he sent from Pontus Deducting one couplet from Joannes Secundus I would strike the bargain

[79] Si modo *alit m*

The *saltem* is here redundant and contrary to Latinity

Southey This elegy I think is equable and pleasing without any great fault or great beauty

Landor In the seventh he discloses the first effects of love on him Here are two verses which I never have read without the heart ache —

[15] Ut mihi adhuc refugam quærebant lumina noctem
N c matutinum u t nu re jubar

We perceive it one moment the first indication of love and of blindness Happy had the blindness been as unreal as the love Cupid is not exalted by a comparison with Paris and Hylas nor the frown of Apollo magnified by the Parthian He writes, as many did *author* for *auctor* very improperly In the sixtieth verse is again *neve* for *nec* nor is it the last time But here come beautiful verses —

[99] Deme meos tandem verum nec deme furores
N scio cur misei e t uaviter omnis amans

I wish *cur* had been *quî* Subjoined to this elegy are ten verses in which he regrets the time he had wasted in love Probably it was on the day (for it could not have cost him more) on which he composed it.

Southey The series of these compositions exhibits little more than so many exercises in mythology You have repeated to me all that is good in them and in such a tone of enthusiasm as made me think better of them than I had ever thought before The first of his epigrams on Leonora Baroni has little merit the second which relates to Tasso has much

Landor I wish, however, that in the sixth[10] line he had substituted *illa* for *eadem* —and not on account of the metre, for *eadem* becomes a spondee, as *eodem* in Virgil s "uno *eodemque* igni" And *sibi* which ends the poem, is superfluous if there must be any word, it should be *et*, which the metre rejects The

[1 The tenth line of this poem runs—
"Voce eadem poteras con posuisse tua]

Scazons against Salmasius are a miserable copy of Persius's heavy prologue to his satires and moreover a copy at second hand for Menage had imitated it in his invective against Mommor whom he calls Gargilius He begins,—

Qu s expedivit psittaco uo χαιρε

But Persius s and Menage s at least are metrical which Milton s in one instance are not The fifth foot should be an iambic In *primatum* we have a spondee The iambics which follow on Salmasius again are just as faulty They start with a false quantity and go on stumbling with the same infirmity The epigram on Mpie the defender of Salmasius is without wit the pun is very poor The next piece a fable of the Farmer and Master is equally vapid But now comes the *Bellipotens Virgo* of which we often have spoken but of which no one ever spoke too highly Christina was flighty and insane but it suited the policy of Cromwell to flatter a queen almost as vain as Elizabeth who could still command the veterans of Gustavus Adolphus We will pass over the Greek verses They are such as no boy of the sixth form would venture to show up in any of our public schools We have only one Alcaic ode in the volume and a very bad one it is The canons of this metre[11] were unknown in Milton's time But, versed as he was in mythology he never should have written—

Nec puppe lustra ses Charontis
Horribiles *b th* recessus

The good Doctor Goslyn was not rowed in that direction nor could any such place be discovered from the bark of Chiron from whom Dr Goslyn had every right as Vice Chancellor of the University to expect civility and attention

Southey We come now to a longer poem and in heroic verse on the *Gunpowder Plot* It appears to me to be even more Ovidian than the *Elegies* Monstrosus Typhoeus Mavortigena Quirinus, the Pope and the mendicant friars meet strangely However, here they are, and now comes Saint Peter, and Bromius

[11 Landor is referring to the faulty form used by Milton in the third line of the Archaic stanza Five out of the twelve are incorrect]

Landor

Hic Dolus intorti semper sedet ater

Though *ocellus* is often used for *oculus* being a diminutive it is if not always a word of endearment yet never applicable to what is terrific or heroic In the 163d verse the Pope is represented as declaring the Protestant religion to be the true one

Et quotquot fidei calu re cupidine veræ

This poem which ends poorly is a wonderful work for a boy of seven een although much less so than Chatterton's *Bristowe Tragedie* and *Ælla*

Southey I suspect you will be less an admirer of the next on *Obitum Præulis Eli ss* —

[13] Qui rex actorum illa fusti a insula
Q æ m Ag lat t

—where he wishes Death were dead

[24] *Et rp*

Again,—

[43] Sub regna fur a luctuosa Tartari
S l bt

Landor He never has descended before to such a bathos as this where he runs against the coming blackamoor in the dark. However, he recovers from the momentary stupefaction and there follow twenty magnificent verses such as Horace himself who excels in this metre never wrote in it But the next, *Naturam non pati senium* is still more admirable I wish only he had omitted the third verse

Heu quam perpetuis rroribus acta fatiscit
Avia mens hominum tenebrisque immersa profundi
Œdipodionam volvit sub pectore noctem

Sublime as *volvit sub pectore noctem* is, the lumbering and ill-composed word *Œdipodionam* spoils it. Beside, the sentence would go on very well, omitting the whole line Gray has much less vigor and animation in the fragment of his philosophical poem Robert Smith alone has more,—how much more!

Enough to rival Lucretius in his noblest passages and to deter the most aspiring from an attempt at Latin poetry The next is also on a philosophical subject, and entitled, *De Idea Platonica quemadmodum Aristoteles intellexit* This is obscure Aristoteles *knew* as others do, that Plato entertained the whimsy of God working from an archetype but he himself was too sound and solid for the admission of such a notion The first five verses are highly poetical the sixth is Cowleian At the close, he scourges Plato for playing the fool so extravagantly and tells him either to recall the poets he has turned out of doors or to go out himself There are people who look up in astonishment at this *archetypus* as frightening God while he works at him Milton has invested him with great dignity and slips only once into the poetical corruptions of the age

Southey Lover as you are of Milton how highly must you be gratified by the poem he addresses to his father!

Landor I am happy remote as we are to think of the pleasure so good a father must have felt on this occasion and how clearly he must have seen in prospective the glory of his son

In the verses after the forty second —

> Cum na regale epulas ornare olebant
> Cum ne idum luxus va trequ immen a origo
> N ta g la t medico f im l it cœna Lyæo
> Ium i more eden festa l n iva at &c

I wish he had omitted the two intermediate lines and had written —

> Carmina regal epula ornare elebant
> Cum d more &

The four toward the conclusion,—

> At tibi har pat r &c

—must have gratified the father as much almost by the harmony as the sentiment

Southey The sections to Salsilla are a just and equitable return for his quatrain for they are full of false quantities without an iota of poetry

Landor But how gloriously he bursts forth again in all his

splendor for Manso!—for Manso who before had enjoyed the immortal honor of being the friend of Tasso!

[70] Dii di cte senex! te Jupiter æquus oportet
Nascentem et miti lustrarit lumine Phœbus
Atlantisque nepos q m n i ha b t
D u p p t it m g o f s e poetæ

And the remainder of the poem is highly enthusiastic What a glorious verse is,—

[84] Franca n Saxonicas Britonum sub Marte phalanges!

Southey I have often wondered that our poets and Milton more especially should be the partizans of the Britons rather than of the Saxons I do not add the Normans for very few of our poets are Norman by descent The Britons seem to have been a barbarous and treacherous race inclined to drunkenness and quarrels Was the whole nation ever worth this noble verse of Milton? It seems to come sounding over the Ægean Sea, and not to have been modulated on the low country of the Liber

Landor In his pastoral on the loss of Diodati entitled *Epitaphium Damonis* there are many beautiful verses for instance,—

[66] Ovium quoque tædet at illæ
Mœrent inque suum convertunt ora magistrum

The pause at *mœrent* and the word also show the great master In Virgil himself it is impossible to find anything more scientific Here, as in *Lycidas*, mythologies are intermixed, and the heroic bursts forth from the pastoral Apollo could not for ever be disguised as the shepherd boy of Admetus

[60] Supra caput imber et Eurus
Triste sonant *f actæq e ag tata crepu l ylvæ*

Southey This is finely expressed, but he found the idea not untouched before Gray and others have worked upon it since It may be well to say little on the *Presentation of the poems to the Bodleian Library* Strophes and antistrophes are here quite out of place, and on no occasion has any Latin poet

so jumbled together the old metres Many of these are irregular and imperfect

[60] *I* Actea gnitu Creusa

is not a verse, *authorum* is not Latin

[78] Et tutela dabit *i* Rou i

is defective in metre This Pindaric ode to Rouse the libra rian is indeed fuller of faults than any other of his Latin compo sitions He tells us himself that he has admitted a spondee for the third foot in the Phalæcian verse because Catullus had done so in he second He never wrote such bad verses or gave such bad reasons all his life before But beautifully and justly has he said —

[86] Si quid mereamur ana posteritas sciet

Landor I find traces in Milton of nearly all the best Latin poets excepting Lucretius This is singular for there is in both of them a generous warmth and a contemptuous severity I admire and love Lucretius There is about him a simple majesty a calm and lofty scorn of every thing pusillanimous and abject and consistently with this character his poetry is mascu line, plain concentrated and energetic But since invention was precluded by the subject and glimpses of imagination could be admitted through but few and narrow apertures it is the in sanity of enthusiasm to prefer his poetical powers to those of Virgil of Catullus and of Ovid in all of whom every part of what constitutes the true poet is much more largely displayed The excellence of Lucretius is that his ornaments are never out of place and are always to be found wherever there is a place for them Ovid knows not what to do with his and is as fond of accumulation as the frequenter of auction rooms He is playful so out of season, that he reminds me of a young lady I saw at Sta Maria Novella, who at one moment crossed herself, and at the next tickled her companion by which process they were both put upon their speed at their prayers, and made very good and happy Small as is the portion of glory which accrues to Milton from his Latin poetry, there are single sentences in it, ay, single images worth all that our island had produced

before In all the volume of Buchanan I doubt whether you can discover a glimpse of poetry and few sparks fly off the anvil of Mary

There is a confidence of better days expressed in this closing poem Enough is to be found in his Latin to insure him a high rank and a lasting name It is however to be regretted that late in life he ran back to the treasures of his youth and estimated them with the fondness of that undiscerning age No poet ever was sorry that he abstained from early publication But Milton seems to have cherished his first effusions with undue partiality Many things written later by him are unworthy of preservation, especially those which exhibit men who provoked him into bitterness Hatred the most vulgar of vulgarisms could never have belonged to his natural character He must have contracted the distemper from theologians and critics The scholar in his days was half clown and half trooper College life could leave but few of its stains and incrustations on a man who had stepped forward so soon into the amenities of Italy and had conversed so familiarly with the most polished gentlemen of the most polished nation

Southey In his attacks on Salmasius and others more obscure, he appears to have mistaken his talent in supposing he was witty

Landor Is there a man in the world wise enough to know whether he himself is witty or not to the extent he aims at? I doubt whether any question needs more self examination It is only the fool's heart that is at rest upon it. He never asks how the matter stands, and feels confident he has only to stoop for it. Milton's dough it must be acknowledged is never the lighter for the bitter barm he kneads up with it.

Southey The Sabbath of his mind required no levities,—no excursions or amusements But he was not ill tempered The worst-tempered men have often the greatest and readiest store of pleasantries Milton on all occasions indignant and wrathful at injustice was unwilling to repress the signification of it when it was directed against himself However I can hardly think he felt so much as he expresses but he seized on bad models in his resolution to show his scholarship Disputants and critics in particular, followed one another with invectives, and he was thought to have given the most manifest proof of original genius

who had invented a new form of reproach I doubt if Milton was so contented with his discomfiture of Satan, or even with his creation of Eve, as with the overthrow of Salmasius under the loads of fetid brimstone he fulminated against him

It is fortunate we have been sitting quite alone while we detected the blemishes of a poet we both venerate The malicious are always the most ready to bring forward an accusation of malice and we should certainly have been served before long with a writ pushed under the door

Landor Are we not somewhat like two little beggar boys who, forgetting that they are in tatters sit noticing a few stains and rents in their father's raiment?

Southey But they love him

Let us now walk homeward We leave behind us the Severn and the sea and the mountains and if smaller things may be mentioned so suddenly after greater we leave behind us the sun dial which marks as we have been doing in regard to Milton the course of the great luminary by a slender line of shadow

Landor After witnessing his glorious ascension we are destined to lower our foreheads over the dreary hydropathy and flannelly voices of the swathed and sinewless

Southey Do not be over sure that you are come to the worst even there Unless you sign a certificate of their health and vigor, your windows and limbs may be broken by the mischievous rabble below

Landor Marauders will cook their greens and bacon though they tear down cedar panels for the purpose

Southey There is an incessant chatterer[1] who has risen to the first dignities of State by the same means as nearly all men rise now by namely opposition to whatever is done or projected by those invested with authority He will never allow us to contemplate greatness at our leisure he will not allow us indeed to look at it for a moment Cæsar must be stripped of his laurels and left bald or some reeling soldier, some insolent swaggerer some stilted ruffian thrust before his triumph If he fights he does not know how to use his sword if he speaks he speaks vile Latin I wonder that Cromwell fares no better, for he lived a hypocrite, and he died a traitor I should not recall to you this

[1 Lord Brougham]

ridiculous man, to whom the Lords have given *the run of the House* —a man pushed off his chair by every party he joins and enjoying all the disgraces he incurs,—were it not that he has also in the fulness of his impudence, raised his cracked voice and incondite language against Milton

Landor I hope his dapple fellow creatures in the lanes will be less noisy and more modest as we pass along them homeward

Southey Wretched as he is in composition superficial as he is in all things without a glimmer of genius or a grain of judgment, yet his abilities and acquirements raise him somewhat high above those more quiescent and unaspiring ones you call his fellow creatures

Landor The main difference is that they are subject to have their usual burdens laid upon them all their lives while his of the woolsack is taken off for ever The illusion struck me from the loudness and dissonance of his voice the wilfulness and perverseness of his disposition and his habitude of turning round on a sudden and kicking up behind

XIX ANDREW MARVELL AND BISHOP PARKER [1]*

Parker Most happy am I to encounter you Mr Marvel It is some time I think since we met May I take the liberty

[1] The Controversy of which the *Rehearsal Transpros'd* was part began with three books written by Dr Parker the most sanguine hound of the clerical pack who seemed to have a mitre in his eye (Thompson's Life of Marvel iii 4 0) These were *Education* (1670) *A Defence of Education* (1671) and *A Preface to Reproof of Bishop Bramhall's Vindication of the Letter to a Friend concerning the Answer of Philalethes* (1673) Marvel's book was an attack on all three Dr Parker retorted with a *Reproof to the Rehearsal Transpros'd* which provoked the second part of the *Rehearsal Transpros'd* from which (p 498, Thompson ed) Landor has quoted the passage given in the note below He has however omitted several words and cut out only enough one passage

* He wrote a work entitled as Hooker's was *Ecclesiastical Polity* in which are these words It is better to submit to the unreasonable impositions of Nero and Caligula than to hazard the dissolution of the

of inquiring what brought you into such a lonely quarter as Bun hillfields?

Marvel My lord, I return at this instant from visiting an

In which Marvel denies that he was ever on friendly terms with Parker In Captain Thompson's Life (p 474) an account is given of one conversation between Marvel and Parker which was not likely to have led to another Parker was not made bishop of Oxford until some years after Marvel's death The full text of the passage quoted by Landor is follows At His Majesty happy return I M did partake even as you yourself did for all your huffing of his regal clemency and has ever since expiated himself in a retired silence It was after that I well remember it that being one day at his house I there first met you and accidentally Since that I have been scarce four or five times in your company but whether it were my foresight or my good fortune I never contracted any friendship or confidence with you But then it was when you as I told you wandered up and down Moorfield astrologizing upon the duration of His Majesty government that you frequented J M incessantly and haunted his house day by day What discourse you there used he is too generous to remember But he never having in the least provoked you for you to insult thus over his old age to traduce him by your *m* and in your own person as a schoolmaster who was born and hath lived much more ingenuously and liberally than yourself to have done all this and lay a last my simple book to his charge without ever taking care to inform your self better which you had so easie opportunity to do nay when you yourself to have said to my knowledge that you saw no such great matter in it but that I might be the author it is humanely and inhospitably done and will I hope be a warning to all others as it is to me to avoid (I will not say such a Judas) but a man that creeps into all companies to jeer trepan and betray them (Works ii 1846 Work iv 1876)]

State It is plain enough to what *p* he recommended the duty of submission for in our fiscal one of the word none ever bore more lightly on the subject than Caligula's and Nero even the provinces were taxed very moderately and fairly by them He adds Princes may with less danger give liberty to men vices and debauchees than to their consciences Marvel answered him in his *R/ /T pr d* n which he says of Milton I well remember that being one day at his house I there first met you and accidentally Then it was that you wondered up and down Moorfields astrologizing upon the duration of His Majesty government You frequented John Milton since antly and haunted his house day by day What discourses you there used he is too generous to remember but he never having in the least provoked you it is inhumanely and inhospitably done to insult thus over his old age I hope it will be a warning to all others as it is to me to avoid I will not say such a Judas but a man that creeps into all companies to jeer trepan and betray them

old friend of our hnd by in Artillery Walk, who you will be happy to hear bears his blindness and asthma with truly Christian courage

Parker And pray who may that old friend be Mr Marvel?

Marvel Honest John Milton

Parker The same gentleman whose ingenious poem on our first parents you praised in some elegant verses prefixed to it?

Marvel The same who likewise on many occasions merited and obtained your lordship's approbation

Parker I am happy to understand that no harsh measures were taken against him, on the return of our most gracious sovereign And it occurs to me that you Mr Marvel were earnest in his behalf Indeed I myself might have stirred upon it had Mr Milton solicited me in the hour of need

Marvel He is grateful to the friends who consulted at the same time his dignity and his safety but gratitude can never be expected to grow on a soil hardened by solicitation Those who are the most ambitious of power are often the least ambitious of glory It requires but little sagacity to foresee that a name will become invested with eternal brightness by belonging to a benefactor of Milton *I might have served him!* is not always the soliloquy of late compassion or of virtuous repentance it is frequently the cry of blind and impotent and wounded pride angry at itself for having neglected a good bargain a rich reversion Believe me my lord bishop there are few whom God has promoted to serve the truly great They are never to be superseded, nor are their names to be obliterated in earth or heaven Were I to trust my observation rather than my feelings, I should believe that friendship is only a state of transition to enmity The wise the excellent in honor and integrity whom it was once our ambition to converse with soon appear in our sight no higher than the ordinary class of our acquaintance then become fit objects to set our own slender wits against to contend with, to interrogate, to subject to the arbitration, not of their equals but of ours, and, lastly,—what indeed is less injustice and less indignity —to neglect, abandon, and disown

Parker I never have doubted that Mr Milton is a learned man,—indeed, he has proven it and there are many who, like yourself, see considerable merit in his poems I confess

that I am an indifferent judge in these matters and I can only hope that he has now corrected what is erroneous in his doctrines

Marvel Latterly he hath never changed a jot in acting or thinking

Parker Wherein I hold him blamable well aware as I am that never to change is thought an indication of rectitude and wisdom But if every thing in this world is progressive if every thing is defective if our growth if our faculties, are obvious and certain signs of it —then surely we should and must be different in different ages and conditions Consciousness of error is to a certain extent a consciousness of understanding and correction of error is the plainest proof of energy and mastery

Marvel No proof of the kind is necessary to my friend and it was not always that your lordship looked down on him so magisterially in reprehension or delivered a sentence from so commanding an elevation I who indeed am but a humble man, am apt to question my judgment where it differs from his I am appalled by any supercilious glance at him and disgusted by any austerity ill assorted with the generosity of his mind When I consider what pure delight we have derived from it what treasures of wisdom it has conveyed to us I find him supremely worthy of my gratitude love and veneration and the neglect in which I now discover him leaves me only the more room for the free effusion of these sentiments How shallow in comparison is every thing else around us trickling and dimpling in the pleasure grounds of our literature! If we are to build our summer houses against ruined temples let us at least abstain from ruining them for the purpose

Parker Nay nay, Mr Marvel! so much warmth is uncalled for

Marvel Is there any thing offensive to your lordship in my expressions?

Parker I am not aware that there is But let us generalize a little, for we are prone to be touchy and testy in favor of our intimates

Marvel I believe, my lord, this fault, or sin or whatsoever it may be designated is among the few that are wearing fast away

Parker Delighted am I my dear sir to join you in your innocent pleasantry But truly and seriously I have known even the prudent grow warm and stir about some close affinity

Marvel Indeed! so indecorous before your lordship?

Parker We may remember when manners were less polite than they are now and not only the seasons of life require an alteration of habits but likewise the changes of society

Marvel Your lordship acts up to your tenets

Parker Perhaps you may blame me, and more severely than I would blame our worthy friend Mr John Milton upon finding a slight variation in my exterior manner and somewhat more reserve than formerly yet wiser and better men than I presume to call myself have complied with the situation to which it hath pleased the Almighty to exalt them

Marvel I am slow to censure any one for assuming an air and demeanor which he is persuaded are more becoming than what he has left off And I subscribe to the justice of the observation, that wiser and better men than your lordship have adapted their language and their looks to elevated station But sympathy is charity or engenders it and sympathy requires proximity closeness contact and at every remove and more especially at every gradation of ascent it grows a little colder When we begin to call a man our *worthy friend* our friendship is already on the wane In him who has been used above his old companions there seldom remains more warmth than what turns every thing about it vapid familiarity sidles towards affability, and kindness courtesies into condescension

Parker I see we are hated for rising

Marvel Many do really hate others for rising but some who appear to hate them for it, hate them only for the bad effects it produces on the character

Parker We are odious I am afraid sometimes for the gift, and sometimes for the giver and malevolence cools her throbs by running to the obscurity of neglected merit We know whose merit that means.

Marvel. What! because the servants of a king have stamped no measure above a certain compass and such only as the vulgar are accustomed to handle, must we disbelieve the existence of any

greater in its capacity or decline the use of it in things lawful and commendable? Little men like these have no business at all with the mensuration of higher minds gaugers are not astronomers

Parker Really Mr Marvel I do not understand metaphors

Marvel Leaving out arithmetic and mathematics and the sciences appertaining to them I never opened a page without one no not even a title page with a dozen words in it Perhaps I am unfortunate in my tropes and figures perhaps they come, by my want of dexterity too near your lordship I would humbly ask, Is there any criminality in the calculation and casting up of manifold benefits or in the employment of those instruments by which alone they are to be calculated and cast up?

Parker Surely none whatever

Marvel It has happened to me and my schoolfellows that, catching small fish in the shallows and ditches of the Humber we called a minnow a perch and a dace a pike because they pleased us in the catching and because we really were ignorant of their quality In like manner do some older ones act in regard to men They who are caught and handled by them are treated with distinction because they are so caught and handled and because self love and self conceit dazzle and delude the senses while those whom they neither can handle nor catch are without a distinctive name We are informed by Aristoteles in his *Treatise on Natural History* that solid horns are dropped and that hollow ones are permanent Now although we may find solid men cast on the earth and hollow men exalted yet never will I believe in the long duration of the hollow or in the long abasement of the solid Milton, although the generality may be ignorant of it is quite as great a genius as Bacon, biting the chancellorship which got for little where a great man is estimated by a wise one

Parker Rather enthusiastic I say Mr Marvel!—the one name having been established for almost a century the other but recently brought forward, and but partially acknowledged By coming so much later into the world he cannot be quite so original in his notions as Lord Verulam

Marvel Solomon said that, even in his time there was nothing new under the sun he said it unwisely and untruly

Parker Solomon? untruly? unwisely?

Marvel The spectacles which by the start you gave had so nearly fallen from the bridge of your nose attest it Had *he* any? It is said and apparently with more reason than formerly that there are no new thoughts What do the fools mean who say it! They might just as well assert that there are no new men, because other men existed before with eyes mouth nostrils, chin and many other appurtenances But as there are myriads of forms between the forms of Scarron and Hudson * on one side and of Mercury and Apollo on the other so there are myriads of thoughts of the same genus each taking its peculiar conformation Æschylus and Racine, struck by the same idea would express a sentiment very differently Do not imagine that the idea is the thought the idea is that which the thought generates rears up to maturity, and calls after its own name Every note in music has been sounded frequently yet a composition of Purcell may be brilliant by its novelty There are extremely few roots in a language yet the language may be varied and novel too age after age Chessboards and numerals are less capable of exhibiting new combinations than poetry and prose likewise is equally capable of displaying new phases and phenomena in images and reflections Good prose to say nothing of the original thoughts it conveys may be infinitely varied in modulation It is only an extension of metres an amplification of harmonies of which even the best and most varied poetry admits but few Comprehending at once the prose and poetry of Milton we could prove before fit audience, that he is incomparably the greatest master of harmony that ever lived

There may be, even in these late days more originality of thought, and flowing in more channels of harmony more bursts and breaks and sinuosities, than we have yet discovered The admirers of Homer never dreamed that a man more pathetic, more sublime, more thoughtful more imaginative would follow

Parker Certainly not

Marvel Yet Shakspeare came, in the memory of our fathers

Parker Mr William Shakspeare of Stratford upon Avon? A remarkably clever man nobody denies it

Marvel At first, people did not know very well what to

* A dwarf in that age

make of him He looked odd he seemed witty he drew tears But a grin and a pinch of snuff can do that

Every great author is a great reformer and the reform is either in thought or language Milton is zealous and effective in both

Parker Some men conceive that if their name is engraven in Gothic letters it signifies and manifests antiquity of family and others that a congestion of queer words and dry chopped sentences which turn the mouth away in reading make them look like original thinkers I have seen fantastical folks of this description who write *wend* instead of *go* and are so ignorant of grammar as even to put *went'd* for *went* I do not say that Mr Milton is one of them but he may have led weak men into the fault

Marvel Not only is he not one of them but his language is never a patchwork of old and new all is of a piece Besides he is the only writer whom it is safe to follow in spelling others are inconsistent some for want of learning some for want of reasoning some for want of memory and some for want of care But there are certain words which ceased to be spelled properly just before his time the substantives *childe* and *wilde* and the verbs *finde* and *winde* for instance

Parker Therein we agree We ought never to have deviated from those who delivered to us our Litany of which the purity is unapproachable and the harmony complete Our tongue has been drooping ever since

Marvel Until Milton touched it again with fire from heaven

Parker Gentlemen seem now to have delegated the correction of the press to their valets and the valets to have devolved it on the chambermaids But I would not advise you to start a fresh reformation in this quarter for the Round heads can't spell and the Royalists won't and if you bring back an ancient form returning all its beauty they will come forward from both sides against you on a charge of coining We will now return, if you please to the poets we were speaking of Both Mr Shakspeare and Mr Milton have considerable merit in their respective ways but both surely are unequal Is it not so Mr Marvel?

Marvel Under the highest of them immeasurable Alps all is not valley and verdure in some places there are frothy cataracts, there are the fruitless beds of noisy torrents and there are dull and hollow glaciers He must be a bad writer or however a very indifferent one in whom there are no inequalities The plants of such table land are diminutive and never worth gathering What would you think of a man's eyes to which all things appear of the same magnitude and at the same elevation? You must think nearly so of a writer who makes as much of small things as of great The vigorous mind has mountains to climb and valleys to repose in Is there any sea without its shoals? On that which the poet navigates he rises intrepidly as the waves rise round him, and sits composedly as they subside

Parker I can listen to this but where the authority of Solomon is questioned and rejected I must avoid the topic Pardon me I collect from what you threw out previously that with strange attachments and strange aversions you cherish singular ideas about greatness

Marvel To pretermit all reference to myself our evil humors, and our good ones too are brought out whimsically We are displeased by him who would be similar to us or who would be near, unless he consent to walk behind To day we are unfriendly to a man of genius whom ten days hence we shall be zealous in extolling —not because we know any thing more of his works or his character but because we have dined in his company and he has desired to be introduced to us A flat ceiling seems to compress those animosities which flame out furiously under the open sky

Parker Sad prejudices! sad infirmities!

Marvel The sadder are opposite to them Usually men in distributing fame, do as old maids and old misers do they give every thing to those who want nothing In literature often a man's solitude, and offence his magnitude, disinclines us from helping him if we find him down We are fonder of warming our hands at a fire already in a blaze than of blowing one I should be glad to see some person as liberal of fame in regard to Milton as in regard to those literators of the town who speedily run it out.

Parker I have always called him a man of parts But Mr Marvel we may bestow as injudiciously as we detract

Marvel Perhaps as injudiciously certainly not injuriously If indeed we are to be called to account for the misapplication of our bestowals a heavy charge will lie against me for an action I committed in my journey hither from Hull I saw an old man working upon the road who was working upon the same road and not far from the same spot when I was first elected to represent that city in Parliament He asked me for *something to make him drink* which consideration, the heat of the weather and the indication his nose exhibited of his propensities did appear superfluous However I gave him a shilling in addition to as many good wishes as he had given me

Parker Not reflecting that he would probably get intoxicated with it?

Marvel I must confess I had all that reflection with its whole depth of shade, upon my conscience and I tried as well as I could to remove the evil I inquired of him whether he was made the happier by the shilling He answered that if I was none the worse for it he was none Then said I honest friend! since two are already the happier prythee try whether two more may not become so therefore drink out of it at supper with thy two best friends

Parker I would rather have advised frugality and laying-by Perhaps he might have had a wife and children

Marvel He could not then unless he were a most unlucky man be puzzled in searching for his two best friends My project gave him more pleasure than my money and I was happy to think that he had many hours for his schemes and anticipations between him and sunset

Parker When I ride or walk, I never carry loose money about me, lest through an inconsiderate benevolence I be tempted in some such manner to misapply it To be robbed would give me as little or less concern

Marvel A man's self is often his worst robber He steals from his own bosom and heart what God has there deposited, and he hides it out of his way as dogs and foxes do with bones But the robberies we commit on the body of our superfluities and store up in vacant places —in places of poverty and sorrow, —

these whether in the dark or in the daylight leave us neither in nakedness nor in fear are marked by no burning iron of conscience, are followed by no scourge of reproach they never deflower prosperity they never distemper sleep

Parker I am ready at all times to award justice to the generosity of your character and no man ever doubted its consistency Believing you to be at heart a loyal subject, I am thrown back on the painful reflection that all our acquaintance are not equally so Mr Milton for example was a republican yet he entered into the service of a usurper you disdained it

Marvel Events proved that my judgment of Cromwell's designs was correcter than his but the warier man is not always the wiser, nor the more active and industrious in the service of his country

Parker His opinions on religion varied also considerably, until at last the vane almost wore out the socket and it could turn no longer

Marvel Is it nothing in the eyes of an Anglican bishop to have carried the gospel of Christ against the Talmudists of Rome the word of God against the traditions of men the liberty of conscience against the conspiracy of tyranny and fraud? If so then the Protector —such was Milton —not of England only, but of Europe, was nothing

Parker You are warm Mr Marvel

Marvel Not by any addition to my cloth, however

Parker He hath seceded, I hear from every form of public worship and doubts are entertained whether he believes any longer in the co equality of the Son with the Father or indeed in his atonement for our sins Such being the case, he forfeits the name and privileges of a Christian

Marvel Not with Christians if they know that he keeps the ordinances of Christ Papists Calvinists, Lutherans and every other kind of scoria exploding in the furnace of zeal, and cracking off from Christianity, stick alike to the side of this gloomy, contracted, and unwholesome doctrine But the steadiest believer in the divinity of our Lord, and in his atonement for us, if pride, arrogance, persecution, malice lust of station, lust of money, lust of power, inflame him is incomparably less a Christian than he who doubteth all that ever was doubted of his genealogy

and hereditary rights yet who never swerveth from his commandments A wise man will always be a Christian because the perfection of wisdom is to know where lies tranquillity of mind and how to attain it, which Christianity teaches but men equally wise may differ and diverge on the sufficiency of testimony, and still further on matters which no testimony can affirm and no intellect comprehend To strangle a man because he has a narrow swallow shall never be inserted among the "infallible cures in my *Book of Domestic Remedies*

Parker We were talking gravely were it not rather more seemly to continue in the same strain Mr Marvel?

Marvel I was afraid that my gravity might appear too specific but with your lordship's permission and exhortation I will proceed in serious reflections —to which indeed on this occasion, I am greatly more inclined Never do I take the liberty to question or examine any man on his religion or to look over his shoulder on his account book with his God But I know that Milton and every other great poet must be religious for there is nothing so godlike as a love of order with a power of bringing great things into it This power —unlimited in the one limited (but incalculably and inconceivably great) in the other — belongs to the Deity and the poet

Parker I shudder

Marvel Wherefore? it seems a man what he was designed to be by his Maker —his Maker's image? But pardon me my lord! the surprise of such a novelty is enough to shock you

Reserving to myself for a future time the liberty of defending my friend on theology in which alone he shifted his camp I may remark what has frequently happened to me I have walked much finding one side of the road miry I have looked toward the other and thought it cleaner I have then gone over and when there I have found it just as bad although it did not seem nearly so until it was tried This however has not induced me to wish that the overseer would bar it up but only to wish that both sides were mended effectually with smaller and more binding materials, not with large loose stones, nor with softer stuff soon converted into mud

Parker Stability, then, and consistency are the qualities most desirable and these I look for in Mr Milton However fond

he was of Athenian terms and practices he rejected them after he had proved them

Marvel It was not in his choice to reject or establish He saw the nation first cast down and liberated by fanaticism, and then utterly exhausted by that quieter blood sucker hypocrisy A powerful arm was wanted to drive away such intolerable pests, and it could not but be a friendly one Cromwell and the saner part of the nation were unanimous in beating down Presbyterianism, which had assumed the authority of the Papacy without its lenity

Parker He, and those saner people had subverted already the better form of Christianity which they found in the Anglican church Your Samson had shaken its pillars by his attack on prelaty

Marvel He saw the prelates in that reign standing as ready there as anywhere to wave the censer before the king and under its smoke to hide the people from him He warned them as an angel would have done,—nay as our Saviour has done —that the wealthy and the proud the flatterer at the palace and the flatterer at the altar in short the man for the world is not the man for heaven

Parker We must lay gentle constructions and liberal interpretations on the Scriptures

Marvel Then let us never open them If they are true we should receive them as they are, if they are false we should reject them totally We cannot pick and choose we cannot say to the Omniscient, We think you right here we think you wrong there however we will meet you halfway and talk it over with you This is such impiety as shocks us even in saying we must avoid it, yet our actions tend to its countenance and support. We clothe the ministers of Christ in the same embroidery as was worn by the proudest of his persecutors and they mount into Pilate's chair The Reformation has effected little more than melting down the gold lace of the old wardrobe, to make it enter the pocket more conveniently

Parker Who would have imagined Mr John Milton should ever have become a seceder and sectarian?—he who, after the days of adolescence looked with an eye of fondness on the idle superstitions of our forefathers, and celebrated them in his poetry!

Marvel When superstitions are only idle it is wiser to look on them kindly than unkindly I have remarked that those which serve best for poetry have more plumage than talon and those which serve best for policy have more talon than plumage Milton never countenanced priestcraft, never countenanced fraud and fallacy

Parker The business is no easy one to separate devotion from practices connected with it There is much that may seem useless returned through ages in an intermixture with what is better and the better would never have been so good as it is if you had cast away the rest What is chaff when the grain is threshed was useful to the grain before its threshing

Marvel Since we are come unawares on religion I would entreat of your lordship to enlighten me and thereby some others of weak minds and tender consciences in regard to the criminality of pretence to holiness

Parker The Lord abominates as you know Mr Marvel from the Holy Scriptures all hypocrisy

Marvel If we make ourselves or others who are not holy seem holy are we worthy to enter his kingdom?

Parker No most unworthy

Marvel What if we set up, not only for good men, but for exquisitely religious such as violate the laws and religion of the country?

Parker Pray, Mr Marvel no longer waste your time and mine in such idle disquisitions We have beheld such men lately and abominate them

Marvel Happily for the salvation of our souls as I conceive, we never went so far as to induce much less to authorize much less to command any one to fall down and worship them

Parker Such insolence and impudence would have brought about the blessed Restoration much earlier

Marvel We are now come to the point. It seems wonderful to pious and considerate men unhesitating believers in God's holy word, that although the Reformation under his guidance was brought about by the prayers and fasting of the bishops, and others well deserving the name of saints, chiefly of the

equestrian order no place in the calendar hath ever been assigned to them

Parker Perhaps as there were several a choice might have seemed particular and invidious Perhaps also the names of many as excellent having been removed from the rubric it was deemed unadvisable to inaugurate them

Marvel Yet my lord bishop we have inserted Charles the Martyr Now there have been saints not martyrs, but no martyr not a saint

Parker Do you talk in this manner —you who had the meanness to praise his courage and constancy to Cromwell's face?

Marvel Cromwell was not a man to undervalue the courage and constancy of an enemy and had he been I should have applauded one in his presence But how happens it that the bishops, priests and deacons throughout England treat Charles as a saint and martyr and hold his death day sacred who violated those ecclesiastical ordinances the violation whereof you would not only reprobate in another but visit with exemplary punishment? Charles was present at plays in his palace on the Sabbath Was he a saint in his lifetime or only after his death? If in his lifetime the single miracle performed by him was to act against his established church without a diminution of holiness If only in his death, he holds his canonization by a different tenure from any of his blessed predecessors

It is curious and sorrowful that Charles the Martyr should have suffered death on the scaffold for renewing the custom of arbitrary loans and forced benevolences which the usurper Richard III abolished Charles to be sure had the misfortune to add the practice of torture and mutilation, to which those among the English who are most exposed to it bear a great dislike Being a martyr, he is placed above the saints in dignity they tortured only themselves.

Parker Let me bring to your recollection, that plays were not prohibited on the Sabbath by our great Reformers

Marvel But if it is unChristianlike now it was then, and a saint must have been aware of it, although it escaped a reformer

Parker You scoff, Mr Marvel! I never answer the scoffer

Marvel I will now be serious Is the canonization of Charles the effect of a firm conviction that he was holier than all those ejected from the calendar or is it merely an ebullition of party spirit an ostentatious display of triumphant spite against his enemies? In this case —and there are too many and too cogent reasons for believing it —would it not be wiser never to have exhibited to the scrutinizing Church of Rome a *consecration* more reprehensible than the former *dese rations?* Either you must acknowledge that saints are not always to be followed in their practices or you must allow men women and children to dance and frequent the playhouses on Sunday as our martyr did before he took to mutilating and miming and he never left off the custom by his own free will

Parker I think, Mr Marvel, you might safely leave these considerations to us

Marvel Very safely my lord! for you are perfectly sure never to meddle with them you are sure to leave them as they are —solely from the pious motive that there may be peace in our days according to the Litany On such a principle, there have been many and still perhaps there may be some remaining who would not brush the dust from the bench lest they should raise the moths and discover the unsoundness and corrosions But there is danger lest the people at some future day should be wiser braver more inquisitive more pertinacious there is danger lest on finding a notorious cheat and perjurer set up by Act of Parliament among the choice and sterling old saints they undervalue not only saints but Parliaments

Parker I would rather take my ground where politics are unmingled with religion and I see better reason to question the wisdom of Mr Milton than the wisdom of our most gracious King's privy council We enjoy thank God! liberty of conscience I must make good my objection on the quarter of consistency lest you think me resolute to find fault where there is none Your friend continued to serve the Protector when he had reconstructed a House of Lords which formerly he called an abomination

Marvel He never served Cromwell but when Cromwell served his country and he would not abandon her defence for the worst wounds he had received in it He was offended at the

renewal of that house after all the labor and pains he had taken in its demolition and he would have given his life if one man's life could have paid for it to throw down again so unshapely and darkening an obstruction From his youth upward he had felt the Norman rust entering into our very vitals and he now saw that if we had received from the bravest of nations a longer sword we wore a heavier chain to support it He began his *History* from a love of the Saxon institutions than which the most enlightened nations had contrived none better nor can we anywhere discover a worthier object for the meditations of a philosophical or for the energies of a poetical mind

Parker And yet you republicans are discontented even with this

Marvel We are not mere Saxons A wise English republican will prefer (as having grown up with him) the Saxon institutions generally and mainly both in spirit and practice, to those of Rome and Athens But the Saxon institutions however excellent, are insufficient The moss must be ripped off the bark, and the bark itself must be slit to let the plant expand Nothing is wholesomer than milk from the udder but would you always drink upon it? The seasons of growth physical and intellectual require different modes of preparation different instruments of tillage different degrees of warmth and excitement Whatever is bad in our Constitution we derive from the Normans or from the glosses put against the text under them Welsh and Scotch successors the good is thrown back to us out of what was ours before Our boasted Magna Charta is only one side of the old Saxon coat and it is the side that has the broken loop holes in it It hangs loose and at every breeze 'tis a hard matter to keep it on In fact the Magna Charta neither is, nor ever was long together, of much value to the body of the people Our princes could always do what they wished to do until lately, and this palladium was so light a matter that it was easily taken from the town-hall to the palace It has been holden back or missing whenever the people most loudly called for it. Municipalities—in other words, small republics—are a nation's main-stay against aristocratical and regal encroachments

Parker If I speak in defence of the peerage, you may think me interested

Marvel Bring forward what may fairly recommend the institution and I shall think you less interested than ingenious

Parker Yet surely you who are well connected cannot be insensible of the advantages it offers to persons of family

Marvel Is that any proof of its benefit to the public? And persons of family!—who are they? Between the titled man of ancient and the titled man of recent times the difference if any is in favor of the last Suppose them both raised for merit (here indeed we do come to theory!) the benefits that society has received from him are nearer us It is probable that many in the poor and abject are of very ancient families and particularly in our county where the contests of the York and Lancaster broke down in many places the high and powerful Some of us may look back six or seven centuries and find a stout ruffian at the beginning but the great ancestor of the pauper who must be somewhere may stand perhaps far beyond

Parker If we ascend to the Tower of Babel and come to the confusion of tongues we come also to a confusion of ideas A man of family in all countries is he whose ancestor attracted by some merit real or imputed the notice of those more eminent who promoted him in wealth and station Now to say nothing of the humble the greater part even of the gentry had no such progenitors

Marvel I look to a person of very old family as I do to any thing else that is very old and I thank him for bringing to me a page of romance which probably he himself never knew or heard about Usually with all his pride and pretensions he is much less conscious of the services his ancestor performed than my spaniel is of his own when he carries my glove or coin for me I would put them both on the head for it and the civiler and more reasonable of the two would think himself well rewarded

Parker The additional name may light your memory to the national service

Marvel We extract this benefit from any ancient peer this phosphorus, from a rotten post

Parker I do not complain or wonder that an irreligious man should be adverse not only to piety but equally to a peerage

Marvel Herodotus tells us that among the Egyptians a herald was a herald because he was a herald's son and not for the clear-

ness of his voice He had told us before that the Egyptians were worshippers of cats and crocodiles but he was too religious a man to sneer at that It was an absurdity that the herald should hold his office for no better reason than because his father held it, Herodotus might peradventure have smiled within his sleeve at no other being given for the privileges of the peer unless he thought a loud voice, which many do more important than information and discretion

Parker You will find your opinions discountenanced by both our universities

Marvel I do not want anybody to corroborate my opinions They keep themselves up by their own weight and consistency Cambridge on one side and Oxford on the other could lend me no effectual support and my skiff shall never be impeded by the sedges of Cam nor grate on the gravel of Isis

Parker Mr Marvel the path of what we fondly call patriotism is highly perilous Courts at least are safe

Marvel I would rather stand on the ridge of Etna than lower my head in the Grotto del Cane By the one I may share the fate of a philosopher by the other I must suffer the death of a cur

Parker We are all of us dust and ashes

Marvel True, my lord but in some we recognize the dust of gold and the ashes of the phœnix in others the dust of the gateway and the ashes of turf and stubble With the greatest rulers upon earth head and crown drop together and are overlooked It is true we read of them in history but we also read in history of crocodiles and hyænas With great writers, whether in poetry or prose what falls away is scarcely more or other than a vesture The features of the man are imprinted on his works, and more lamps burn over them and more religiously than are lighted in temples or churches Milton and men like him, bring their own incense, kindle it with their own fire, and leave it unconsumed and unconsumable, and their music, by day and by night swells along a vault commensurate with the vault of heaven

Parker Mr Marvel, I am admiring the extremely fine lace of your cravat

Marvel It cost me less than lawn would have done, and it

wins me a reflection Very few can think that man a great man whom they have been accustomed to meet dressed exactly like themselves more especially if they happen to find him not in park forest or chase, but warming his limbs by the reflected heat of the bricks in Artillery Walk In England a man becomes a great man by living in the middle of a great field in Italy by living in a walled city in France by living in a courtyard no matter what lives they lead there

Parker I am afraid Mr Marvel there is some slight bitterness in your observation

Marvel Bitterness it may be from the bruised laurel of Milton

What falsehoods will not men put on if they can only pad them with a little piety! And how few will expose their whole faces from a fear of being frost bitten by poverty! But Milton was among the few

Parker Already have we had our Deluge we are now once more upon dry land again, and we behold the same creation as rejoiced us formerly Our late gloomy and turbulent times are passed for ever

Marvel Perhaps they are if anything is for ever but the spurning Deluge may peradventure be commuted for unsparing fire as we are threatened The arrogant the privileged the stiff upholders of established wrong the deaf opponents of equitable reformation the lazy consumers of ill requited industry the fraudulent who unable to stop the course of the sun, pervert the direction of the gnomon —all these peradventure may be gradually consumed by the process of silent contempt or suddenly scattered by the tempest of popular indignation As we see in masquerades the real judge and the real soldier stopped and mocked by the fictitious so do we see in the carnival of to-day the real man of dignity hustled shoved aside and derided by those who are invested with the semblance by the milliners of the court. The populace is taught to respect this livery alone, and is proud of being permitted to look through the grating at such ephemeral frippery And yet false gems and false metals have never been valued above real ones. Until our people alter these notions, until they estimate the wise and virtuous above the silly and profligate, the man of

genius above the man of title until they hold th knave and cheat of St James s as low as the knave and cheat of St Giles s – they are fitter for the slave market than for any other station

Parker You would have no distinctions I fear

Marvel On the contrary I would have greater than at present You cannot blot or burn out an ancient name cannot annihilate past services you cannot subtract one single hour from eternity nor with r one leaf on his brow who hath entered into it Sweep away from before me the soft grubs of yesterday s formation generated by the sickliness of the plant they feed upon sweep them away unsparingly —then will you clearly see distinctions and easily count the men who have attained them worthily

Parker In a want of respect to established power and principles originated most of the calamities we have latterly undergone

Marvel Say rather in the averseness of that power and the inadequacy of those principles for ist the encro ment of injustice say rather on their tende to distort the poor creatures swaddled up in them ada mo covet th reluctance of the old women who lock and d nail them to change their habiliments for fresh and wholesor A man will break the windows of his own house th h ay no p rish by foul air within now whether is he or those who bolted t e door on him, to blame for it? If he is called mad or incen dia te it is only by those who are ignorant of the cause and insensibl of the ur ency I declare I am rejoiced at seeing gentlem n whose ancestors have signally served their country treated with deference and respect because it evinces a sense of justice and of grati tude in the people and because it may incite a few others who e ambition would take another course to desire the same Diffe n is my sentence when he who has not performed the ac claims more honor than he who performed it and thinks hi elf the worthier if twenty are between them than if there be one or none Still less accordant is it with my princi les, and less reducible to my comprehension that they who devised the ruin of cities and societie should be exhibited as deserving m ch higher distinction than they who have corrected the hea

and enlarged the intellects and have performed it not only without the hope of reward but almost with the certainty of persecution

Parker Ever too hard upon great men Mr Marvel!

Marvel Little men in lofty places who throw long shadows because our sun is setting—the men so little and the places so lofty that casting my pebble I only know where they stand They would be less contented with themselves if they had obtained their preferment honestly Luck and dexterity always give more pleasure than intellect and knowledge because they fill up what the full on to the brim at once and people run to them with acclamations at the splash Wisdom is reserved and noiseless content with old cunnings and daily letting go some only acquisition to make room for better specimens But great is the exultation of a worthless man when he receives for the chipmunk reputation of his Bridewell logwood a richer reward than the best and wisest extensive tracts of well cleared truths when half of posterity—

Parker Pray good Mr Marvel!

Marvel I have a higher estimation than he who would have [illegible] man my genius is heard above the voice this [illegible] of [illegible] in her central shrine that hath bowed down [illegible] that hath used up nations from the dust [illegible] old worthy to celebrate is an eleventh [illegible] and to precede with it solitary sound the trumpet that will call us to our doom

Parker I am unwilling to fetter ignorance of the gentleman you design but really now you would make a very Homer of him

Marvel It appears to me that Homer is to Milton what a harp is to an organ though a harp under the hand of Apollo

Parker I have always done him justice I have always called him a learned man

Marvel Call him henceforward the most glorious one that ever existed upon earth If two—Bacon and Shakspeare—have equalled him in diversity and intensity of power did either of these spring away with such resolution from the sublimest heights of genius to liberate and illuminate with patient labor the manacled human race? And what is his recompence The

same recompence as all men like him have received and will receive for ages Persecution follows righteousness the Scorpion is next in succession to Libra The fool however who ventures to detract from Milton's genius in the night which now appears to close on him will when the dawn has opened on his dull ferocity be ready to bite off a limb if he might thereby limp away from the trap he has prowled into Among the gentler the better and the wiser few have entered yet the awful structure of his mind few comprehend few are willing to contemplate its vastness Politics now occupy scarcely a closet in it We seldom are inclined to converse on them and when we do it is jocosely rather than austerely For even the bitterest berries grow less acrid when they have been hanging long on the tree Beside it is time to sit with our hats between our legs since so many grave men have lately seen their errors and so many brave ones have already given proofs enough of their bravery, and trip aside to lay down their laurels on gilt tables and velvet cushions. If my friend condemns any one now, it is Cromwell and principally for reconstructing a hereditary house of peers He perceives that it was done for the purpose of giving the aristocracy an interest in the perpetuation of power in his family, of which he discovered the folly just before his death He derides the stupidity of those who bandy about the bittered phrase of *useful checks and necessary counterpoises* He would not desire a hindrance on his steward in the receipt of his rent, if he had any nor on his attorney in prosecuting his suit he would not recommend any interest in opposition to that of the people he would not allow an honest man to be arrested and imprisoned for debt, while a dishonest one is privileged to be exempt from it, and he calls that nation unwise and those laws iniquitous which tolerate so flagrant an abuse He would not allow a tradesman who lives by his reputation for honesty, to be calumniated as dishonest without the means of vindicating his character unless by an oppressive and dilatory procedure, while a peer, who perhaps may live by dishonesty, as some are reported to have done in former reigns recurs to an immediate and uncostly remedy against a similar accusation He would not see Mother Church lie with a lawyer on the woolsack, nor the ministry of the apostles devolve on the Crown sacred and uncontaminated as we see it is

Parker No scoffs at the Crown, I do beseech you Mr Marvel! whatever enmity you and Mr Milton may bear against the peers He would have none of them, it seems

Marvel He would have as many as can prove by any precedent or argument that virtue and abilities are hereditary and I believe he would stint them exactly to that number In regard to their services, he made these observations a few days ago Why in God's name friend Andrew do we imagine that a thing can be made stable by pulling at it perpetually in different directions? Where there are contrary and conflicting interests one will predominate at one time another at another Now what interest at any time ought to predominate against the public? We hear indeed that when the royal power is oppressive to them the peers push their horns against the leopards but did they so in the time of James or his son? And are not the people strong enough to help and right themselves if they were but wise enough? And if they were wise enough would they whistle for the wolves to act in concert with the shepherd dogs? Our consciences tell us, added he that we should have done some good had our intentions been well seconded and supported Collegians and barristers and courtiers may despise the poverty of our intellects throw a few of their old scraps into our satchels and send the beadle to show us the road we ought to take nevertheless we are wilful, and refuse to surrender our old customary parochial footpath

Parker And could not he let alone the poor innocent collegians?

Marvel Nobody ever thought them more innocent than he, unless when their square caps were fanning the flames round heretics and every man is liable to be a heretic in his turn Collegians have always been foremost in the cure of the *lues* of heresy by sweating and crustic

Parker Sir! they have always been foremost in maintaining the unity of the faith

Marvel So zealously, that whatever was the king's faith was theirs And thus it will always be until their privileges and immunities are in jeopardy then shall you see them the most desperate incendiaries

Parker After so many species of religion, generated in the

sty of old corruptions we return to what experience teaches us is best If the Independents or any other sect had reason on their side and truly evangelical doctrine they would not die away and come to nothing as they have done

Marvel Men do not stick very passionately and tenaciously to a pure religion there must be honey on the outside of it and warmth within, and latitude around or they make little bellow and bustle about it That Milton has been latterly no frequenter of public worship may be lamented but is not unaccountable He has lived long enough to perceive that all sects are animated by a spirit of hostility and exclusion —a spirit the very opposite to the gospel There is so much malignity hot blooded and cold blooded in zealots that I do not wonder at seeing the honest man who is tired of dissension and controversy, wrap himself up in his own quiet conscience and indulge in a tranquillity somewhat like sleep apart. Nearly all are of opinion that devotion is purer and more ardent in solitude but declare to you that they believe it to be their duty to set an example by going to church Is not this pride and vanity? What must they conceive of their own value and importance to imagine that others will necessarily look up to them as guides and models! A hint of such an infirmity arouses all their choler, and from that moment we are unworthy of being saved by them But if they abandon us to what must appear to them so hopeless a condition can we doubt whether they would not abandon a babe floating like Moses in a basket on a wide and rapid river? I have always found these people, whatever may be the sect, self sufficient hard hearted, intolerant and unjust,—in short the opposite of Milton What wonder then if he abstains from their society particularly in places of worship, where it must affect a rational and religious man the most painfully? He thinks that churches, as now constituted, are to religion what pest houses are to health —that they often infect those who ailed nothing and withhold them from freedom and exercise Austerity hath oftener been objected to him than indifference That neither of the objections is well founded, I think I can demonstrate by an anecdote Visiting him last month, I found him hearing read by his daughter the treatise of Varro *On Agriculture* and I said, laughingly, "We will walk over your farm together" He smiled, although he

could not see that I did and he answered I never wish to possess a farm because I can enjoy the smell of the hay and of the hawthorn in a walk to Hampstead and can drink fresh milk there After a pause he added I cannot tell (for nobody is more ignorant in these matters) in what our agriculture differs from the ancient but I am delighted to be reminded of a custom which my girl has been recalling to my memory —the custom of crowning with a garland of sweet herbs once a year the brink of wells Andrew! the old moss grown stones were not neglected from under which the father and son the wife and daughter drew the same pure element with the same thankfulness as their hale progenitors His piety is infused into all the moods of his mind here it was calm and gentle at other times it was ardent and enthusiastic The right application of homely qualities is of daily and general use We all want glass for the window few want it for the telescope

Parker It is very amiable to undertake the defence of a person who, whatever may be his other talents certainly has possessed but in a moderate degree the talent of making or of retaining friends

Marvel He by the constitution of the human mind or rather by its configuration under those spiritual guides who claim the tutelage of it must necessarily have more enemies than even another of the same principl The great abhor the greater who can humble but cannot raise them The king's servants hate God's as much (one would fancy) as if he fed them better dressed them finelier and gave them more plumy title Poor Milton has all these against him what is wanting in weight is made up by multitude and multiformity Judges and privy counsellors throw axes and halters in his path divines grow hard and earthy about him slim straddling blotchy writers those of quality in particular feel themselves cramped and stunted under him and people of small worth in every way detract from his, stamping on it as if they were going to spring over it What ever they pick up against him they take pains to circulate and are sorrier at last that the defamation is untrue than that they helped to propagate it I wish truth were as prolific as falsehood, and as many were ready to educate her offspring But although we see the progeny of falsehood shoot up into amazing

stature and grow day by day more florid, yet they soon have reached their maturity —soon lose both teeth and tresses As the glory of England is in part identified with Milton's his enemies are little less than parricides If they had any sight beyond to day what would they give how would they implore and supplicate to be forgotten!

Parker Very conscientious men may surely have reprehended him according to the light that God has lent them

Marvel They might have burned God's oil in better investigations Your conscientious men are oftener conscientious in withholding than in bestowing

Parker Writers of all ranks and conditions, from the lowest to the highest have disputed with Mr Milton on all the topics he has undertaken

Marvel And I am grieved to think that he has noticed some of them Salmasius alone was not unworthy *sublimi flagello* But what would your lordship argue from the imprudence and irreverence of the dwarfs? The most prominent rocks and headlands are most exposed to the violence of the sea but those which can repel the waves are in little danger from the corrosion of the limpets

Parker Mr Milton may reasonably be censured for writing on subjects whereof his knowledge is imperfect or null on courts for instance The greater part of those who allow such a license to their pens and he among the rest never were admitted into them. I am sorry to remark that our English are the foremost beagles in this cry

Marvel If Milton was never admitted within them, he never was importunate for admittance and if none were suffered to enter but such as are better and wiser than he the gates of Paradise are themselves less glorious, and with less difficulty thrown open The great, as we usually call the fortunate, are only what Solomon says about them, — 'the highest part of the dust of the world and this highest part is the lightest Do you imagine that all the ministers and kings under the canopy of heaven are, in the sight of a pure Intelligence, equivalent to him whom this pure Intelligence hath enabled to penetrate with an unfailing voice the dense array of distant generations? Can princes give more than God can, or

are their gifts better? That they are usually thought so is no conclusive proof of the fact On the contrary with me at least what is usually thought on any subject of importance and on many of none lies under the suspicion of being wrong for surely the number of those who think correctly is smaller than of those who think incorrectly even when passions and interests interfere the least Of those who appear to love God and who sincerely think they do the greater part must be conscious that they are not very fond of the men whom he hath shown himself the most indulgent to and the most enriched with abilities and virtues Among the plants of the field we look out for the salubrious and we cultivate and cull them to the wholesomer of our fellow creatures we exhibit no such partiality we think we do enough when we only pass them without treading on them if we leave them to blossom and run to seed it is forbearance

Parker Mr Milton hath received his reward from his employers

Marvel His services are hardly yet begun and no mortal man no series of transitory generations can repay them God will not delegate this no, not even to his angels I venture no longer to stand up for him on English ground but since we both are Englishmen by birth I may stand up for the remainder of our countrymen Your lordship is pleased to remark that they are the first *beagles* in the cry against courts Now I speak with all the freedom and all the field knowledge of a Yorkshireman when I declare that your lordship is a bad sportsman in giving a *hound's* title to dogs that hunt vermin

Parker Mr Marvel! a person of your education should abstain from mentioning thus contemptuously men of the same rank and condition as yourself

Marvel All are of the same rank and condition with me who have climbed as high who have stood as firmly and who have never yet descended Neglect of time subserviency to fortune compliance with power and passions would thrust men far below me, although they had been exalted higher, to the uncalculating eye, than mortal ever was exalted Sardanapalus had more subjects and more admirers than Cromwell whom,

nevertheless I venture to denominate the most sagacious and prudent the most tolerant and humane the most firm and effective, prince in the annals of our country

Parker Usurpers should not be thus commended

Marvel Usurpers are the natural and imprescriptible successors of imbecile unprincipled and lawless kings In general, they too are little better furnished with virtues and even their wisdom seems to wear out under the ermine Ambition makes them hazardous and rash these qualities raise the acclamations of the vulgar to whom meteors are always greater than stars and the same qualities which raised them precipitate them into perdition Sometimes obstreperous mirth sometimes gipsy-like mysteriousness, sometimes the austerity of old republicanism and sometimes the stilts of modern monarchy, come into play until the crowd hisses the actor off the stage pelted broken-headed, and stumbling over his sword Cromwell used none of these grimaces He wore a mask while it suited him but its features were grave and he threw it off in the heat of action

Parker On the whole you speak more favorably of a man who was only your equal than of those whom legitimate power has raised above you

Marvel Never can I do so much good as he did He was hypocritical and, in countermining perfidy he was perfidious but his wisdom, his valor and his vigilance saved the nation at Worcester and Dunbar He took unlawful and violent possession of supreme authority but he exercised it with moderation and discretion Even fanaticism had with him an English cast of countenance He never indulged her appetite in blood nor carried her to hear the music of tortures reverberated by the arch of a dungeon He supplied her with no optical glass at the spectacle of mutilations he never thought as Archbishop Laud did, he could improve God's image by amputating ears and slitting noses, he never drove men into holy madness with incessant howlings like the Ivcanthropic saints of the North

Having, then, before me not only his arduous achievements, but likewise his abstinence from those evil practices in which all our sovereigns, his predecessors, had indulged I should be the most insolent and the most absurd of mortals if I supposed that the Protector of England was only my equal But I am

not obliged by the force of truth and duty to admit even to this position those whom court servility may proclaim to the populace as my superiors A gardener may write *sweet lupin* on the cover of rape seed but the cover will never turn rape seed into sweet lupin Something more than a couple of beasts couchant or rampant blue or blazing or than a brace of birds with a claw on a red curtain, is requisite to raise an earl or a marquis up to me although lion king at arms and garter kings at arms equip them with all their harness and beget them a grandfather each I flap down with the border of my glove and brush away and blow off these gossamer pretensions and I take for my motto what the king bears for his I hope as a model for all his subjects — Dieu et mon droit

Parker Mr Marvel! Mr Marvel! I did not think you so proud a man

Marvel No, my lord?—not when you know that Milton is my friend? If you wish to reduce me and others to our level pronounce that name and we find it The French motto merely from its being French recalls my attention to what I was about to notice when your lordship so obligingly led me to cover I will now undertake to prove that the English beagles are neither the first nor the best in scenting what lieth about courts A French writer an ecclesiastic a dignitary a bishop wrote lately —

> Courts are full of all offences it is there that all the passions are in an uproar * it is there that hatred and friendship change incessantly for interest and nothing is constant but the desire of injuring Friendship as Jeremiah says is fraudulent to friend brother to brother The art of ensnaring has nothing dishonorable in it excepting all success In short virtue herself often false becomes more to be dreaded than vice

Now if there were any like place upon earth would not even the worst prince the worst people insist on its destruction? What brothel, what gaming house what den of thieves what wreck, what conflagration ought to be surrounded so strictly by the protectors of property, the guardians of morals and the ministers of justice? Should any such conspirator any adder or

* The original is defective in logic C'est la que toute les passions se reunissent pour s'entre chocquer et *se detr* So much the better were it true

abettor any familiar or confidant, of such conspiracy be suffered to live at large? Milton in the mildness of his humanity would at once let loose the delinquents, and would only nail up for ever the foul receptacle

Parker The description is exaggerated

Marvel It is not a schoolboy's theme beginning with Nothing is more sure or, Nothing is more deplorable it is not an undergraduate exercise, drawn from pure fresh thoughts where there are only glimpses through the wood before him o taken up in reliance on higher men to whom past ages have bowed in veneration no the view is taken on the spot by one experienced and scientific in it—by the dispassionate, the disinterested the clear sighted and clear souled Massillon

Parker To show his eloquence no doubt

Marvel No eloquence is perfect none worth showing none becoming a Christian teacher but that in which the postulates are just and the deductions not carried beyond nor cast beside them, nor strained hard nor snatched hastily I quote not from stern republicans I quote not from loose lay people but from the interior of the court from the closet of the palace, from under the canopy and cope of Episcopacy herself In the same spirit the amiable and modest Fenelon speaks thus "Alas! to what calamities are kings exposed! The wisest of them are often taken by surprise men of artifice, swayed by self-interest surround them the good retire from them because they are neither supplicants nor flatterers, and because they wait to be inquired for and princes know not where they are to be found Oh how unhappy is a king to be exposed to the designs of the wicked!

It is impossible to draw any other deduction from this hypothesis than the necessity of abolishing the kingly office, not only for the good of the people but likewise of the functionaries. Why should the wisest and the best among them be subject to so heavy a calamity—a calamity so easily avoided? Why should there be tolerated a focus and point of attraction for wicked men? Why should we permit the good to be excluded whether by force or shame, from any place which ought to be a post of honor? Why do we suffer a block to stand in their way, which by its nature hath neither eyes to discern them, nor those about it who would permit the use of the discovery if it had?

Parker Horrible questions! leading God knows whither!

Marvel The questions are originally not mine No person who reasons on what he reads can ever have read the works of Fenelon and not have asked them If what he says is true they follow necessarily and the answer is ready for every one of them That they are true we may well surmise for surely nobody was less likely to express his sentiments with prejudice or precipitancy or passion He and Massillon are such witnesses against courts and royalty as cannot be rejected They bring forward their weighty and conclusive evidence not only without heat but without intention and disclose what they overheard as they communed with their conscience There may be malice in the thoughts and acrimony in the expressions of those learned men who as you remark were never admitted into courts although malice and acrimony are quite as little to be expected in them as in the spectators at a grand amphitheatre because they could only be retired and look on and were precluded from the arena in the combat of man and beast

Parker There may be malice where there is no acrimony there may be here

Marvel The existence of either is impossible in well regulated minds

Parker I beg your pardon Mr Marvel

Marvel What my lord! do you admit that even in well regulated minds the worst passions may be excited by royalty? It must then be bad indeed worse than Milton worse than Massillon, worse than Fenelon represents it The frugal republican may detest it for its vicious luxury and inordinate expenditure the strict religionist as one of the worst curses an offended God inflicted on a disobedient and rebellious people the man of calmer and more indulgent piety may grieve at seeing it with all its devils possess the swine pitying the poor creatures into which it is permitted to enter not through their fault but their infirmity —not by their will, but their position

Parker And do you imagine it is by their will that what is inrooted is taken away from them?

Marvel Certainly not Another proof of their infirmity Did you ever lose a rotten tooth my lord without holding up your hand against it? Or was there ever one drawn at which

you did not rejoice when it was done? All the authorities we have brought forward may teach us, that the wearer of a crown is usually the worse for it that it collects the most vicious of every kind about it as a nocturnal blaze in uncultivated lands collects poisonous reptiles and that it renders bad those who without it might never have become so But no authority before your lordship ever went so far as to throw within its noxious agency the little that remained uncorrupted none ever told us for our caution that it can do what nothing else can namely that it can excite the worst passions in well regulated minds

O Royalty! if this be true I with my lord bishop will detest and abhor thee as the most sweeping leveller! Go go thou indivisible in the infernal triad with Sin and Death!

Parker I must not hear this

Marvel I spoke hypothetically and stood within your own premises referring to no actual state of things and least of all inclined to touch upon the very glorious one in which we live Royalty is in her place and sits gracefully by the side of our second Charles

Parker Here, Mr Marvel we have no divergence of opinion

Marvel Enjoying this advantage I am the more anxious that my friend should partake in it whose last political conversation with me was greatly more moderate than the language of the eloquent French bishop 'We ought said he to remove any thing by which a single fellow creature may be deteriorated how much rather then that which deteriorates many millions, and brands with the stamp of servitude the brow of the human race

Parker Do you call this more moderate?

Marvel I call it so because it is more argumentative It is in the temper and style of Milton to avoid the complaining tone of the one prelate and the declamatory of the other His hand falls on his subject without the softener of cuff or ruffle

Parker So much the worse But better as it is than with an axe in it for God knows where it might fall

Marvel He went on saying that the most clear sighted kings can see but a little way before them and around them, there being so many mediums, and that delegated authority is liable to gross abuses

Parker Republics too must delegate a portion of their authority to agents at a distance

Marvel Every agent in a well regulated republic is a portion of itself Citizen must resemble citizen in all political essentials but what is privileged bears little resemblance to what is unprivileged In fact the words *privilege* and *prerogative* are *manifestoes* of injustice without one word added

Parker Yet the people would not have your republic when they had tried it

Marvel Nor would the people have God when they had tried him But is this an argument why we should not obey his ordinances and serve him with all our strength?

Parker Oh strange comparison! I am quite shocked Mr Marvel!

Marvel What! at seeing any work of the Deity at all resemble the Maker at all remind us of him? May I be often so shocked that light thoughts and troublesome wishes and unworthy resentments may be shaken off me and that the Giver of all good may appear to me and converse with me in the garden he has planted!

Parker Then walk humbly with him Mr Marvel

Marvel Every day I bend nearer to the dust that is to receive me and if this were not sufficient to warn me the sight of my old friend would I repress my own ambitions that I may continue to repeat his words tending to prove the vast difference between the administration of a kingly government and a common wealth where all offices in contact with the people are municipal where the officers are chosen on the spot by such as know them personally and by such as have an immediate and paramount interest in giving them the preference This, he insisted is the greatest of all advantages and this alone (but truly it is *not* alone) would give the republican an incontestable superiority over every other system

Parker Supposing it in theory to have its merits the laws no longer permit us to recommend it in practice

Marvel I am not attempting to make or to reclaim a convert. The foot that has slipped back is less ready for progress than the foot that never had advanced

Parker Sir! I know my duty to God and my king

Marvel I also have attempted to learn mine however unsuccessfully

Parker There is danger sir in holding such discourses The cause is no longer to be defended without a violation of the statutes

Marvel I am a republican and will die one but rather if the choice is left me in my own bed yet on turf or over the ladder unreluctantly, if God draws thither with the cause and conscience and strikes upon my heart to waken me I have been I will not say tolerant and indulgent (words applicable to children only) but friendly and cordial toward many good men whose reason stood in opposition and almost (if reason can be hostile) in hostility to mine When we desire to regulate our watches we keep them attentively before us and touch them carefully gently delicately with the finest and best tempered instrument day after day When we would manage the minds of men finding them at all different from our own, we thrust them away from us with blind impetuosity and throw them down in the dirt to make them follow us the quicklier In the turbulence of attack from all directions our cause hath been decried by some not for being bad in itself but for being supported by bad men What! are there no pretenders to charity to friendship to devotion? Should we sit uneasy and shuffling under it and push our shoulders against every post to rub it off merely for the Scotch having worn it in common with us, and for their having shortened unstitched, and sold it?

Parker Their history is overrun more rankly than any other, excepting the French, with blood and treachery *

Marvel Half of them are Menteiths † Even their quietest and most philosophical spirits are alert and clamorous in defence of any villany committed by power or compensated by wealth In the degeneracy of Greece, in her utter subjugation, was there one historian or one poet vile enough to represent as

* Undoubtedly such were the sentiments of Milton and Marvel and they were just But Scotland in our days has produced not only the calmest and most profound reasoners she has also given birth to the most enlightened and energetic patriots

† Menteith was the betrayer of Wallace the bravest hero the hero in most points our island has gloried in since Alfred

blameless the conduct of Clytemnestra? Yet what labors of the press are bestowed on a Queen of Scotland who committed the same crime without the same instigation who had been educated in the principles of Christianity who had conversed from her guilhood with the polite and learned and who had spent only a very few years among the barbarians of the North!

Parker Her subjects were angry not that she was punished but that she was unpaid for They would have sold her cheaper than they sold her grandson and being so reasonable they were outrageous that there were no bidders Mr Marvel! the Scotch have always been cringing when hungry always cruel when full their avarice is without satiety their corruption is without shame and their ferocity is without remorse

Marvel Among such men there may be demagogues there cannot be republicans there may be lovers of free quarters there cannot be of freedom Reverencing the bold and the sincere and in them the character of our country we English men did not punish those ministers who came forth uncited and who avowed in the House of Commons that they had been the advisers of the Crown in all the misdemeanors against which we brought the heaviest charges We bethought us of the ingratitude of the injuries, of the indignities we had sustained we bethought us of our wealth transferred from the nation to raise up enemies against it we bethought us of patient piety and of tranquil courage in chains in dungeons tortured maimed, mangled for the assertion of truth and of freedom of religion and of law

Parker Our most gracious king is disposed to allow a considerable latitude repressing at the same time that obstinate spirit which prevails across the border Much of the Scottish character may be attributed to the national religion in which the damnatory has the upper hand of the absolving

Marvel Our judges are merciful to those who profess the king's reputed and the duke's acknowledged tenets but let a man stand up for the Independents, and out pops Mr Attorney-General, throws him on his back, claps a tongue scraper into his mouth, and exercises it resolutely and unsparingly

Parker I know nothing of your new fangled sects, but

the doctrines of the Anglican and the Romish church approximate

Marvel The shepherd of the seven hills teaches his sheep in what tone to bleat before him just as the Tyrolean teaches his bullfinch — first by depriving him of sight and then by making him repeat a certain series of notes at stated intervals Prudent and quiet people will choose their churches as they choose their ale houses — partly for the wholesomeness of the draught, and partly for the moderation of the charges but the host in both places must be civil and must not damn you, body and soul, by way of invitation The wheat sheaf is a very good sign for the one and a very bad one for the other Tithes are more ticklish things than tenets when men's brains are sound and there are more and worse stumbling blocks at the barn door than at the church porch I never saw a priest, Romanist or Anglican who would tuck up his surplice to remove them Whichever does it first will have the most voices for him but he must be an Englishman, and serve only Englishmen he must resign the cook's perquisites to the Spaniard he must give up not only the fat, but the blood and he must keep fewer fagots in the kitchen Since whatever the country, whatever the state of civilization the Church of Rome remains the same since under her influence the polite Louis at the present day commits as much bloodshed and perfidy, and commands as many conflagrations and rapes to her honor and advancement as the most barbarous kings and prelates in times past — I do hope that no insolence, no rapacity, no profligacy, no infidelity, in our own lord spiritual will render us either the passive captives of her insinuating encroachments, or the indifferent spectators of her triumphal entrance We shall be told it was the religion of Alfred, the religion of the Plantagenets There may be victory there may be glory, there may be good men, under all forms and fabrics of belief Titus, Trajan the two Antonines, the two Gordians, Probus Tacitus, rendered their countrymen much happier than the Plantagenets or the greater and better Alfred, could do Let us receive as brethren our countrymen of every creed, and reject as Christians those only who refuse to receive them

Parker Most willingly if such is the pleasure of the King and Privy Council And I am delighted to find you who are so steadfast a republican, extolling the emperors

Marvel Your idea of *emperor* is incorrect or inadequate Cincinnatus and Cato were emperors in the Roman sense of the word The Germans and Turks and Moroccines cut out theirs upon another model These Romans and many more in the same station did nothing without the consent the approbation the *command* (for such was the expression) of the senate and the people They lived among the wiser and better citizens with whom they conversed as equals and where it was proper (for instance on subjects of literature) as inferiors From these they took their wives, and with the sons and daughters of these they educated their children In the decline of the Common wealth kings themselves on the boundaries of the empire, were daily and hourly convers ant with honest and learned men All princes in our days are so educated as to detest the unmalleable and unmelting honesty which will receive no impression from them nor do they even let you work for them unless they can bend you double We must strip off our own clothes, or they never will let us be measured for their livery which has now become our only protection

Parker It behooves us to obey otherwise we can expect no forbearance and no tranquillity

Marvel I wish the tranquillity of our country may last beyond our time although we should live (which we cannot expect to do) twenty years

Parker God grant we may!

Marvel Life clings with the pertinacity of an impassioned mistress to many a man who is willing to abandon it, while he who too much loves it loses it

Parker Twenty years!

Marvel I have enjoyed but little of it at a time when it becomes a necessary of life, and I fear I shall leave us little for a heritage

Parker But in regard to living,—we are both of us hale men, we may hope for many days yet we may yet see many changes

Marvel I have lived to see one too many

Parker Whoever goes into political life must be contented with the same fare as others of the same rank who embark in the same expedition

Marvel Before his cruise is over he learns to be satisfied with a very small quantity of fresh provisions His nutriment is from what is stale and his courage from what is heady, he looks burly and bold but a fatal disease is lying at the bottom of an excited and inflated heart We think to thrive by surrendering our capacities, but we can no more live my lord bishop with breathing the breath of other men than we can by not breathing our own Compliancy will serve us poorly and ineffectually Men, like columns are only strong while they are upright

Parker You were speaking of other times and you always speak best among the Greeks and Romans Continue pray!

Marvel Sovereignty in the heathen world had sympathies with humanity and power never thought herself contaminated by touching the hand of wisdom It was before Andromache came on the stage, painted and patched and powdered, with a hogshead-hoop about her haunches and a pack saddle on her pole, surmounted with upright hair larded and dredged it was before Orestes was created monseigneur it was before there strutted under a triumphal arch of curls, and through a Via Sacra of plumery Louis the Fourteenth

Parker The ally of His Majesty—

Marvel And something more A gilded organ-pipe, puffed from below for those above to play

Parker Respect the cousin—

Marvel I know not whose cousin but the acknowledged brat of milliner and furrier with *perruquier* for godfather And such, forsooth, are the *make believes* we must respect! A nucleus of powder! an efflorescence of frill!

Parker Subject and prince stand now upon another footing than formerly

Marvel Indeed they do How dignified is the address of Plutarch to Trajan! how familiar is Pliny's to Vespasian! how tender, how paternal, is Fronto's to Antoninus! how totally free from adulation and servility is Julius Pollux to the ungentle Commodus! Letters were not trampled down dis-

damfully either in the groves of Antioch or under the colonnades of Palmyra Not pleasure the gentle enfeebler of the human intellect not tyranny and bigotry its violent assailants — crossed the walk of the philosopher to stand between him and his speculations What is more two ancient religions the Grecian and Egyptian met in perfectly good temper at Alexandria, lived and flourished there together for many centuries united in honoring whatever was worthy of honor in each communion and never heard of persecution for matters of opinion until Christianity came and taught it Thenceforward for fifteen hundred years, blood has been perpetually spouting from under neath her footsteps and the wretch clinging exhausted to the cross is left naked by the impostor who pretends to have stripped him only to heal his wounds

Parker Presbyterians and other sectaries were lately as cruel and hypocritical as any in former times

Marvel They were certainly not less cruel, and perhaps even more hypocritical English hearts were contracted and hardened by an open exposure to the North they now are collapsing into the putridity of the South We were ashamed of a beggarly distemper but parasitical and skin deep we are now ostentatious of a gentlemanly one eating into the very bones

Parker Our children may expect from Lord Clarendon a fair account of the prime movers in the late disturbances

Marvel He knew but one party and saw it only in its gala suit. He despises those whom he left on the old litter and he fancies that all who have not risen want the ability to rise No doubt, he will speak unfavorably of those whom I most esteem be it so if their lives and writings do not controvert him they are unworthy of my defence Were I upon terms of intimacy with him I would render him a service by sending him the best translations, from Greek and Latin authors of maxims left us by the wisest men —maxims which my friends held longer than their fortunes, and dearer than their lives And are the vapors of such quagmires as Clarendon to overcast the luminaries of mankind? Should a Hyde lift up —I will not say his hand I will not say his voice,—should he lift up his eyes against a Milton?

Parker Mr Milton would have benefited the world much more by coming into its little humors, and by complying with it cheerfully

Marvel As the needle turns away from the rising sun, from the meridian from the Occident from regions of fragrancy and gold and gems and moves with unerring impulse to the frosts and deserts of the North so Milton and some few others in politics, philosophy and religion walk through the busy multitude wave aside the importunate trader, and after a momentary oscillation from external agency, are found in the twilight and in the storm pointing with certain index to the pole star of immutable truth

Parker The nation in general thanks him little for what he has been doing

Marvel Men who have been unsparing of their wisdom, like ladies who have been unfrugal of their favors are abandoned by those who owe most to them and hated or slighted by the rest I wish beauty in her lost estate had consolations like genius

Parker Fie fie! Mr Marvel! Consolations for frailty!

Marvel What wants them more? The reed is cut down, and seldom does the sickle wound the hand that cuts it There it lies, trampled on withered, and soon to be blown away

Parker We should be careful and circumspect in our pity and see that it falls on clean ground Such a laxity of morals can be taught only in Mr Milton's school He composed I remember a *Treatise on Divorce*, and would have given it great facilities

Marvel He proved by many arguments what requires but few,—that happiness is better than unhappiness that when two persons cannot agree, it is wiser and more Christianlike that they should not disagree that when they cease to love each other, it is something if they be hindered by the gentlest of checks from running to the extremity of hatred and, lastly how it conduces to circumspection and forbearance to be aware that the bond of matrimony is not indissoluble and that the bleeding heart may be saved from bursting

Parker Monstrous sophistry! abominable doctrines! What more, sir! what more?

Marvel He proceeds to demonstrate that boisterous manners, captious contradictions jars jealousies suspicions, dissensions, are juster causes of separation than the only one leading to it through the laws —which fault, grievous as it is to morality and religion, may have occurred but once and may have been followed by

immediate and most sorrowful repentance and by a greater anxiety to be clear of future offence than before it was committed in itself it is not so irreconcilable and inconsistent with gentleness good humor generosity and even conjugal affection

Parker Palpable perversion!

Marvel I suppos it to have been committed but once and then there is the fairest inference the most reasonable as well as the most charitable supposition —nay, almost the plainest proof — of the more legitimate attachment

Parker Fear apprehension of exposure of shame of abandonment may force the vagrant to retrace her steps

Marvel God grant then the marks of them never may be discovered!

Parker Let the laws have their satisfaction

Marvel Had ever the Furies theirs or the Devil his? And yet when were they stinted? Are the laws or are we the better or the milder for this satisfaction?—or is keenness of appetite a sign of it?

Parker Reverence the laws of God Mr Marvel if you contemn those of your country Even the Parliament which you and Mr Milton must respect since no King was coexistent with it discountenanced and chastised such laxity

Marvel I dare not look back upon a Parliament which was without the benefit of a King and had also lost its spiritual guides —the barons of your bench but well do I remember that our blessed Lord and Saviour was gentler in his rebuke to the woman who had offended than he was to Scribes and Pharisees

Parker There is no argument of any hold on men of slippery morals

Marvel My morals have indeed been so slippery that they have let me down on the ground and left me there Every year I have grown poorer yet never was I conscious of having spent my money among the unworthy until the time came for them to show it by their ingratitude My morals have not made me slip into an Episcopal throne—

Parker Neither have mine me sir! and I would have you to know it, Mr Marvel!

Marvel Your lordship has already that satisfaction

Parker Pardon my interruption my dear sir! and the appearance of warmth such as truth and sincerity at times put on

Marvel It belongs to your lordship to grant pardon it is ours who have offended to receive it.

Parker Mr Marvel I have always admired your fine gentlemanly manners, and regretted that you never have turned your wit to good account, in an age when hardly any thing else is held of value Sound learning rises indeed but rises slowly; piety although in estimation with the King is less prized by certain persons who have access to his presence wit Mr Marvel when properly directed —not too high nor too low —will sooner or later find a station It is well at all times to avoid asperity and acrimony and to submit with a willing mind to God's dispensations be what they may Probably a great part of your friend's misfortunes may be attributed to the intemperance of his rebukes

Marvel Then what you call immoral and impious did him less harm?

Parker I would not say *that* altogether To me indeed, his treatise on *Divorce* is most offensive the treatise on *Prelaty* is contemptible

Marvel Nevertheless, in the narrow view of my humble understanding, there is no human eloquence at all comparable to certain parts of it. And permit me to remind your lordship, that you continued on the most friendly terms with him long after its publication

Parker I do not give up a friend for a trifle

Marvel Your lordship, it appears, must have more than a trifle for the surrender I have usually found that those who make faults of foibles and crimes of faults, have within themselves an impulse toward worse and give ready way to such impulse whenever they can secretly or safely There is a gravity which is not austere nor captious, which belongs not to melancholy, nor dwells in contraction of heart, but arises from tenderness and hangs upon reflection.

Parker Whatsoever may be the gravity of Mr Milton, I have heard indistinctly that he has not always been the

kindest of husbands Being a sagacious and a prudent man he ought never to have taken a wife until he had ascertained her character

Marvel Pray inform me whether the wisest men have been the most fortunate or if you prefer the expression the most provident in their choice? Of Solomon s wives (several hundreds) is it recorded that a single one sympathized with him loved him respected him or esteemed him? His wisdom and his poetry flowed alike on barren sand his cedar frowned on him his lily drooped and withered before he had raised up his head from its hard cold glossiness or had inhaled its fragrance with a second sigh Disappointments sour most the less experienced Young ladies are ready in imagining that marriage is all cake and kisses but very few of them are housewives long before they discover that the vinous fermentation may be followed too soon by the acetous Rarely do they discover, and more rarely do they admit that such is the result of their own mismanagement What woman can declare with sincerity that she never in the calmer days of life has felt surprise—and shame also, if she is virtuous and sensible—at recollecting how nearly the same interest was excited in her by the most frivolous and least frivolous of her admirers The downy thistle seed hard to be uprooted is carried by the lightest breath of air and takes an imperceptible hold on what it catches it falls the more readily into the more open breast but sometimes the less open is vainly buttoned up against it

Milton has I am afraid imitated too closely the authoritative voice of the patriarchs and been somewhat too Oriental (I forbear to say Scriptural) in his relations as a husband But who whether among the graver or less grave, is just to woman? There may be moments when the beloved tells us and tells us truly that we are dearer to her than life Is not this enough? Is it not above all merit Yet if ever the ardor of her enthusiasm subsides if her love ever loses later in the day the spirit and vivacity of its early dawn if between the sigh and the blush an interval is perceptible if the arm mistakes the chair for the shoulder —what an outcry is there! what a proclamation of her injustice and her inconstancy! what an alternation of shrinking and spurning at the coldness of her heart! Do we ask

within if our own has retained all its ancient loyalty, all its own warmth, and all that was poured into it? Often the true lover has little of true love compared with what he has undeservedly received and unreasonably exacts But let it also be remembered that marriage is the metempsychosis of women,—that it turns them into different creatures from what they were before Liveliness in the girl may have been mistaken for good temper, the little pervicacity which at first is attractively provoking at last provokes without its attractiveness negligence of order and propriety of duties and civilities long endured often deprecated, ceases to be tolerable, when children grow up and are in danger of following the example It often happens that if a man unhappy in the married state were to disclose the manifold causes of his uneasiness they would be found, by those who were beyond their influence to be of such a nature as rather to excite derision than sympathy The waters of bitterness do not fall on his head in a cataract but through a colander —one however, like the vases of the Danaides perforated only for replenishment We know scarcely the vestibule of a house of which we fancy we have penetrated into all the corners We know not how grievously a man may have suffered, long before the calumnies of the world befell him as he reluctantly left his house-door There are women from whom incessant tears of anger swell forth at imaginary wrongs but of contrition for their own delinquencies not one

Milton in writing his treatise of which probably the first idea was suggested from his own residence was aware that the laws should provide, not only against our violence and injustice, but against our levity and inconstancy and that a man's capriciousness or satiety should not burst asunder the ties by which families are united Do you believe that the crime of adultery has never been committed to the end of obtaining a divorce? Do you believe that murder, that suicide never has been committed because a divorce was unattainable? Thus the most cruel tortures are terminated by the most frightful crimes Milton has made his appeal to the authority of religion we lower our eyes from him, and point to the miseries and guilt on every side before us, caused by the corrosion or the violent disruption of bonds which humanity would have loosened. He

would have tried with a patient ear and with a delicate hand the chord that offended by its harshness and when he could not reduce it to the proper tone, he would remove it for another

Parker Mr Marvel! Mr Marvel! I cannot follow you among these fiddlesticks The age is notoriously irreligious

Marvel I believe it I know it and without a claim to extraordinary acuteness I fancy I can discover by what means and by whose agency, it became so The preachers who exhibit most vehemence are the very men who support the worst corruptions,—corruptions not a portion of our nature but sticking thereto by our slovenly supineness Of what use is it to rail against our infirmities of what use even to pity and bemoan them, if we help not in removing the evils that rise perpetually out of them? Were every man to sweep the mire from before his house every morning he would have little cause to complain of dirty streets Some dust might be carried into them by the wind the tread of multitudes would make unsound what was solid —yet nothing being accumulated the labor of removing the obstructions would be light Another thing has increased the irreligion and immorality of the people, beside examples in elevated stations Whatever is over constrained will relax or crack The age of Milton (for that was his age in which he was heard and honored) was too religious if any thing can be called so Prelaty now lays a soft and frilled hand upon our childishness Forty years ago she stripped up her sleeve scourged us heartily and spit upon us —to remove the smut no doubt! This treatment made people run in all directions from her not unlike the primeval man described by Lucretius fleeing before the fiercer and stronger animals

> Viva videns vi o pelri viscera busto
> At quos fugium s rvarat corpore ad so
> Po terin tremulas sup r ulcera tetra ten ntes
> Palma horrificis adcibant vocibus orcum

Parker Dear me! what a memory you possess good Mr Marvel! You pronounce Latin verses charmingly I wish you would go on to the end of the book

Marvel Permit me to go on a shorter distance —to the conclusion of my remarks. As popery caused the violence

of the Reformers so did prelaty (the same thing under another name) the violence of the Presbyterians and Anabaptists. She treated them inhumanly she reduced to poverty, she exiled, she maimed she mutilated, she stabbed she shot she hanged, those who followed Christ in the narrow and quiet lane rather than along the dust of the market-road and who conversed with him rather in the cottage than the tollbooth She would have nothing pass unless through her hands and she imposed a heavy and intolerable tax on the necessaries both of physical and of spiritual life This baronial privilege our Parliament would have suppressed the King rose against the suppression and broke his knuckles in the cogs of the mill

Parker Sad times Mr Marvel sad times! It fills me with heaviness to hear of them

Marvel Low places are foggy first days of sadness wet the people to the skin they hung loosely for some time upon the ermine, but at last they penetrate it and cause it to be thrown off I do not like to hear a man cry out with pain but I would rather hear one than twenty Sorrow is the growth of all seasons we had much however to relieve it Never did our England since she first emerged from the ocean rise so high above surrounding nations. The rivalry of Holland, the pride of Spain, the insolence of France were thrust back by one finger each yet those countries were then more powerful than they had ever been The sword of Cromwell was preceded by the mace of Milton by that mace which when Oliver had rendered his account, opened to our contemplation the garden-gate of Paradise And there were some around not unworthy to enter with him In the compass of sixteen centuries you will not number on the whole earth so many wise and admirable men as you could have found united in that single day, when England showed her true magnitude and solved the question, *Which is most one or a million?* There were giants in those days, but giants who feared God, and not who fought against him Less men, it appears, are braver They show him a legal writ of ejectment, seize upon his house, and riotously carouse therein But the morning must come, and heaviness, we know, cometh in the morning

Parker Wide is the difference between carousal and austerity

Your friend miscalculated the steps to fortune, in which as we all are the architects of our own if we omit the insertion of one or two, the rest are useless in furthering our ascent He was too passionate Mr Marvel he was indeed

Marvel Superficial men have no absorbing passion there are no whirlpools in a shallow I have often been amused at thinking in what estimation the greatest of mankind were holden by their contemporaries Not even the most sagacious and prudent one could discover much of them, or could prognosticate their future course in the infinity of space! Men like ourselves are permitted to stand near and indeed in the very presence of Milton What do they see?—dark clothes gray hair and sightless eyes! Other men have better things other men therefore are nobler! The stars themselves are only bright by distance go close and all is earthy But vapors illuminate these from the breath and from the countenance of God comes light on worlds higher than they, —worlds to which he has given the forms and names of Shakspeare and of Milton

Parker After all I doubt whether much of his doctrine is remaining in the public mind

Marvel Others are not inclined to remember all that we remember, and will not attend to us if we propose to tell them half Water will take up but a certain quantity of salt even of the finest and purest If the short memories of men are to be quoted against the excellence of instruction, your lordship would never have censured them from the pulpit for forgetting what was delivered by their Saviour It is much, my lord bishop that you allow my friend even the pittance of praise you have bestowed for if you will permit me to express my sentiments in verse which I am in the habit of doing I would say —

> Men like the ancient kalends nones and ide
> Are reckoned backward and the first stand last

I am confident that Milton is heedless of how little weight he is held by those who are of none and that he never looks toward those somewhat more eminent, between whom and himself there have crept the waters of oblivion As the pearl ripens in the obscurity of its shell so ripens in the tomb all the fame that is truly precious In fame he will be happier than in friendship

Were it possible that one among the faithful of the angels could have suffered wounds and dissolution in his conflict with the false, I should scarcely feel greater awe at discovering on some bleak mountain the bones of this our mighty defender once shining in celestial panoply once glowing at the trumpet blast of God but not proof against the desperate and the damned than I have felt at entering the humble abode of Milton, whose spirit already reaches heaven yet whose corporeal frame hath no quiet or safe resting place here below And shall not I who loved him early have the lonely and sad privilege to love him still? Or shall fidelity to power be a virtue and fidelity to tribulation an offence?

Parker We may best show our fidelity by our discretion It becomes my station, and suits my principles, to defend the English Constitution both in Church and State

Marvel You highly praised the *Defence of the English People* you called it a masterly piece of rhetoric and ratiocination

Parker I might have admired the subtilty of it and have praised the Latinity

Marvel Less reasonably But his godlike mind shines gloriously throughout his work only perhaps we look the more intently at it for the cloud it penetrates Those who think we have enough of his poetry still regret that we possess too little of his prose and wish especially for more of his historical compositions Davila and Bacon—

Parker You mean Lord Verulam

Marvel That idle title was indeed thrown over his shoulders but the trapping was unlikely to rest long upon a creature of such proud paces He and Davila are the only men of high genius among the moderns who have attempted it and the greater of them has failed He wanted honesty he perverted facts, he courted favor the present in his eyes was larger than the future

Parker The Italians who far excel us in the writing of history, are farther behind the ancients

Marvel True enough From Guicciardini and Machiavelli, the most celebrated of them, we acquire a vast quantity of trivial information There is about them a sawdust which absorbs much blood and impurity, and of which the level surface is dry, but no

traces by what agency rose such magnificent cities above the hovels of France and Germany —none

Ut fortis Etruria crevit

or on the contrary, how the mistress of the world sank in the ordure of her priesthood

Scilicet et rerum facta est nequissima Roma

We are captivated by no charms of description we are detained by no peculiarities of character we hear a clamorous scuffle in the street and we close the door How different the historians of antiquity! We read Sallust and always are incited by the desire of reading on although we are surrounded by conspirators and barbarians we read Livy until we imagine we are standing in an august pantheon covered with altars and standards over which are the four fatal letters that spellbound all mankind * We step forth again among the modern Italians here we find plenty of rogues plenty of receipts for making more and little else In the best passages we come upon a crowd of dark reflections which scarcely a glimmer of glory pierces through and we start at the tenuity of the spectres but never at their altitude

Give me the poetical mind the mind poetical in all things give me the poetical heart the heart of hope and confidence that beats the more strongly and resolutely under the good thrown down, and raises up fabric after fabric on the same foundation

Parker At your time of life, Mr Marvel?

Marvel At mine my lord bishop! I have lived with Milton Such creative and redeeming spirits are like kindly and renovating Nature Volcano comes after volcano, yet covereth she with herbage and foliage with vine and olive and with whatever else refresheth and gladdens her the Earth that has been gasping under the exhaustion of her throes

Parker He has given us such a description of Eve's beauty as appears to me somewhat too pictorial, too luxuriant too suggestive, too—I know not what

* S P Q R

Marvel The sight of beauty in her purity and beatitude, turns us from all unrighteousness and is death to sin

Parker Before we part my good Mr Marvel, let me assure you that we part in amity and that I bear no resentment in my breast against your friend I am patient of Mr Milton I am more than patient,—I am indulgent seeing that his influence on society is past

Marvel Past it is indeed What a deplorable thing is it that folly should so constantly have power over wisdom, and wisdom so intermittently over folly! But we live morally, as we used to live politically under a representative system and the majority (to employ a phrase of people at elections) carries the day

Parker Let us piously hope Mr Marvel that God in his good time may turn Mr Milton from the error of his ways and incline his heart to repentance and that so he may finally be prepared for death

Marvel The wicked can never be prepared for it the good always are What is the preparation which so many ruffled wrists point out?—to gabble over prayer and praise and confession and contrition My lord heaven is not to be won by short hard work at the last as some of us take a degree at the university after much irregularity and negligence I prefer a steady pace from the outset to the end coming in cool and dismounting quietly Instead of which I have known many old playfellows of the Devil spring up suddenly from their beds, and strike at him treacherously while he without a cuff, laughed and made grimaces in the corner of the room

XX STEELE AND ADDISON[1]

Addison Dick! I am come to remonstrate with you on those unlucky habits which have been so detrimental to your health and fortune

[1 Mr Aitken in his erudite Life of Steele say concerning the subject of this Conversation The most trustworthy account is that told by Benjamin Victor to Garrick in a letter written in 176. He says that

Steele Many thanks Mr Addison but really my fortune is not much improved by your arresting me for the hundred pounds nor is my health if spirits are an indication of it on seeing my furniture sold by auction to raise the money

Addison Pooh pooh Dick! what furniture had you about the house?

Steele At least I had the arm chair of which you never before had dispossessed me longer than the evening and happy should I have been to enjoy your company in it again and again if you had left it me

Addison We will contrive to hire another I do assure you my dear Dick I have really felt for you

Steele I only wish my kind friend you had not put out your feelers quite so far nor exactly in this direction and that my poor wife had received in hours notice she might have carried a few trinkets to some neighbor She wanted her salts, and the bailiff thanked her for the bottle that contained them telling her the gold head of it was worth pretty nearly half a guinea

Addison Lady Steele then wanted her smelling bottle? Dear me! the weather I apprehend is about to change Have you any symptoms of your old gout?

Steele My health has been long on the decline, you know

Addison Too well I know it my dear friend and I hinted it as delicately as I could Nothing on earth beside this consideration should have induced me to pursue a measure in appearance so unfriendly You must grow more temperate —you really must

Steele Mr Addison you did not speak so gravely and so

he had his relation first from Wilkes but that afterwards in 1725 he had a full confirmation from Steele's own lips According to Victor's letter Steele borrowed £1000 from Addison on the house at Hampton Wick giving bond and judgment for the repayment of the money at the end of twelve month Upon the forfeiture of the bond Addison's attorney proceeded to execution the house and furniture being sold and the surplus sent to Steele with a genteel letter stating the friendly reason for this extraordinary proceeding viz to awaken him if possible from a lethargy that must end in his inevitable ruin The affair seems to have caused no interruption in the friendship between Steele and Addison (Aikett's Literary Hours 1837 Works II 1846 Works V 1876)]

firmly when we used to meet at Will's You always drank as much as I did and often invited and pressed me to continue when I was weary sleepy and sick

Addison You thought so because you were drunk Indeed, at my own house I have sometimes asked you to take another glass in compliance with the rule of society and hospitality

Steele Once it is true you did it at your house —the only time I ever had an invitation to dine in it The countess was never fond of the wit that smells of wine her husband could once endure it.

Addison We could talk more freely you know at the tavern There we have dined together some hundred times

Steele Most days for many years

Addison Ah Dick! since we first met there several of our friends are gone off the stage

Steele And some are still acting

Addison Forbear my dear friend to joke and smile at infirmities or vices Many have departed from us in consequence I apprehend, of indulging in the bottle When passions are excited, when reason is disturbed when reputation is sullied, when fortune is squandered, and when health is lost by it a retreat is sounded in vain Some cannot hear it others will not profit by it.

Steele I must do you the justice to declare that I never saw any other effect of hard drinking upon you than to make you more circumspect and silent

Addison If ever I urged you in the warmth of my heart, to transgress the bounds of sobriety I entreat you as a Christian, to forgive me

Steele Most willingly most cordially

Addison. I feel confident that you will think of me, speak of me and write of me as you have ever done without a diminution of esteem We are feeble creatures we want one another's aid and assistance,—a want ordained by Providence to show us at once our insufficiency and our strength We must not abandon our friends from slight motives nor let our passions be our interpreters in their own cause Consistency is not more requisite to the sound Christian than to the accomplished politician

Steele I am inconsistent in my resolutions of improvement —no man ever was more so but my attachments have a nerve in them neither to be deadened by ill-treatment nor loosened by indulgence A man grievously wounded knows by the acuteness of the pain that a spirit of vitality is yet in him I know that I return my friendship for you by what you have made me suffer

Addison Entirely for your own good, I do protest if you could see it

Steele Alas! all our sufferings are so the only mischief is, that we have no organs for perceiving it

Addison You reason well my worthy sir and relying on your kindness in my favor (for every man has enemies and those mostly who serve their friends best) —I say Dick on these considerations since you never broke your word with me and since I am certain you would be sorry it were known that only fourscore pounds worth could be found in the house I renounce for the present the twenty yet wanting Do not beat about for an answer say not one word farewell!

Steele Ah! could not that cold heart * often and long as I reposed on it bring me to my senses? I have indeed been drunken but it is hard to awake a man in such heaviness as this of mine is I shared his poverty with him I never aimed to share his prosperity Well well I cannot break old habits I love my glass I love Addison Each will partake in killing me Why cannot I see him again in the arm chair his right hand upon his heart under the fawn colored waistcoat, his brow erect and clear as his conscience his eye even and composed as his temper with measurely cut and pathetical top knots like his style, the calmest poet the most quiet patriot dear Addison! drunk deliberate moral sentimental mine over with truth and virtue with tenderness and friendship and only the worse in one ruffle for the wine

* Doubts are now entertained whether the character of Addison is fairly represented by Pope and Johnson It is better to make this statement than to omit a *Conversation* which had appeared elsewhere

XXI LA FONTAINE AND DE I A ROCHEFOUCAULT [1]

I a Fontaine I im truly sensible of the honor I receive M de la Rochefoucault, in a visit from a personage so distinguished by his birth and by his genius Pardon my ambition, if I confess to you that I have long and ardently wished for the good fortune which I never could promise myself, of knowing you personally

Ro hefoucault My dear M de la Fontaine!

I a Fontaine Not *de* la not ' *de* la I im *La* Fo itaine purely and simply

Rochefoucault The whole not derivative You appear in the midst of your purity to have been educated at court in the lap of the ladies What was the last day (pardon!) I had the misfortune to miss you there?

La Fontaine I never go to court They say one cannot go without silk stockings, and I have only thiee id —plenty of them indeed thank God! Yet (would you believe it?) Ninon in putting i *solette* to the bottom of one last week sewed it so carelessly she made a kind of cord across and I verily believe it will lame me for life for I walked the whole morning upon it

Rochefoucault She ought to be whipped

I a Fontaine I thought so too ind grew the warmer at being unable to find a wisp of osier or a roll of pickthread in the house Barely had I begun with my garter when in came the Bishop of Grasse my old friend Godeau and another lord, whose name he mentioned and they both interceded fo her so long and so touchingly that at last I was fain to let her rise up and go I never saw men look down on the erring and afflicted more compassionately The bishop was quite concerned for me also But the other although he professed to feel even more, and said that it must surely be the pain of purgatory to me, took

[1 The date of this Conversation which is strictly "Imaginary can be fixed In 1679 La Fontaine went to Court to present a copy of his works to the King and forgot the book Rochefoucault died in the year 1680 The Conversation is one of the best Both the characters are well kept up and there is very little Theology (Works II 1846 Works, V 1876)]

a pinch of snuff opened his waistcoat drew down his ruffles and seemed rather more indifferent

Rochefoucault Providentially in such moving scenes the worst is soon over But Godeau's friend was not too sensitive

La Fontaine Sensitive! no more than if he had been educated at the butcher's or the Sorbonne

Rochefoucault I am afraid there are as many hard hearts under satin waistcoats as there are ugly visages under the same material in miniature case

La Fontaine My lord I could show you a miniature case which contains your humble servant in which the painter has done what no tailor in his senses would do he has given me credit for a coat of violet silk with silver frogs as large as tortoises But I am loath to get up for it while the generous heart of this dog (if I mentioned his name he would jump up) places such confidence on my knee

Rochefoucault Pray do not move on any account above all lest you should disturb that amiable grey cat, fast asleep in his innocence on your shoulder

La Fontaine Ah rogue! art thou there? Why thou hast not licked my face this half hour!

Rochefoucault And more too I should imagine I do not judge from his somnolency, which if he were president of the Parliament could not be graver but from his natural sagacity Cats weigh practicabilities What sort of tongue has he?

La Fontaine He has the roughest tongue and the tenderest heart of any cat in Paris If you observe the color of his coat it is rather blue than grey —a certain indication of goodness in these contemplative creatures.

Rochefoucault We were talking of his tongue alone by which cats like men are flatterers

La Fontaine Ah! you gentlemen of the court are much mistaken in thinking that vices have so extensive a range There are some of our vices, like some of our diseases, from which the quadrupeds are exempt and those, both diseases and vices are the most discreditable

Rochefoucault I do not hear patiently any evil spoken of the court for it must be acknowledged by the most malicious that the court is the purifier of the whole nation

La Fontaine I know little of the court, and less of the whole nation but how can this be?

Rochefoucault It collects all ramblers and gamblers all the market-men and market women who deal in articles which God has thrown into their baskets, without any trouble on their part all the seducers and all who wish to be seduced all the duellists who efface their crimes with their swords and sweat out their cowardice with daily practice all the nobles whose patents of nobility lie in gold snuff boxes or have worn Mechlin ruffles or are deposited within the archives of knee-deep waistcoats all stock jobbers and church-jobbers, the black legged and the red-legged game, the flower of the *justaucorps* the *robe* and the *soutane* If these were spread over the surface of France instead of close compressure in the court or cabinet, they would corrupt the whole country in two years As matters now stand, it will require a quarter of a century to effect it

La Fontaine Am I not right then in preferring my beasts to yours? But if yours were loose, mine (as you prove to me) would be the last to suffer by it poor dear creatures! Speaking of cats I would have avoided all personality that might be offensive to them I would not exactly have said in so many words, that, by their tongues, they are flatterers, like men Language may take a turn advantageously in favor of our friends True, we resemble all animals in something I am quite ashamed and mortified that your lordship, or anybody, should have had the start of me in this reflection When a cat flatters with his tongue, he is not insincere you may safely take it for a real kindness. He is loyal M de la Rochefoucault! my word for him, he is loyal Observe too, if you please, no cat ever licks you when he wants anything from you so that there is nothing of baseness in such an act of adulation, if we must call it so For my part, I am slow to designate by so foul a name that (be it what it may) which is subsequent to a kindness Cats ask plainly for what they want

Rochefoucault And if they cannot get it by protocols, they get it by invasion and assault

La Fontaine No! no! usually they go elsewhere, and fondle those from whom they obtain it In this I see no resemblance to invaders and conquerors. I draw no parallels I would

excite no heart burnings between us and them Let all have their due

I do not like to lift this creature off for it would waken him else I could find out by some subsequent action the reason why he has not been on the alert to lick my cheek for so long a time

Rochefoucault Cats are wary and provident He would not enter into any contest with you however friendly He only licks your face I presume while your beard is but a match for his tongue

La Fontaine Ha! you remind me Indeed I did begin to think my beard was rather of the roughest for yesterday Madame de Rambouillet sent me a plate of strawberries the first of the season, and I used (would you believe it?) under glass One of these strawberries was dropping from my lips and I attempted to stop it When I thought it had fallen to the ground 'Look for it, Nanon pick it up and eat it, said I

"Master!" cried the wench your beard has skewered and spitted it — Honest girl I answered come cull it from the bed of its adoption

I had resolved to shave myself this morning but our wisest and best resolutions too often come to nothing poor mortals!

Rochefoucault We often do very well every thing but the only thing we hope to do best of all and our projects often drop from us by their weight A little while ago your friend Moliere exhibited a remarkable proof of it

La Fontaine Ah, poor Moliere! the best man in the world, but flighty negligent thoughtless He throws him self into other men and does not remember where The sight of an eagle M de la Rochefoucault, but the memory of a fly!

Rochefoucault I will give you an example but perhaps it is already known to you

La Fontaine Likely enough We have each so many friends neither of us can trip but the other is invited to the laugh Well, I am sure he has no malice, and I hope I have none, but who can see his own faults?

Rochefoucault He had brought out a new edition of his *Comedies*

La Fontaine There will be fifty there will be a hundred nothing in our language, or in any is so delightful so graceful,—I will add so clear at once and so profound

Rochefoucault You are among the few who seeing well his other qualities see that Molière is also profound In order to present the new edition to the Dauphin he had put on a sky-blue velvet coat powdered with fleur de lis He laid the volume on his library table and resolving that none of the courtiers should have an opportunity of ridiculing him for any thing like absence of mind he returned to his bed room which as may often be the case in the economy of poets is also his dressing room Here he surveyed himself in his mirror as well as the creeks and lagoons in it would permit

La Fontaine I do assure you from my own observation M de la Rochefoucault, that his mirror is a splendid one I should take it to be nearly three feet high, reckoning the frame with the Cupid above and the elephant under I suspected it was the present of some great lady and indeed I have since heard as much

Rochefoucault Perhaps then, the whole story may be quite as fabulous as the part of it which I have been relating

La Fontaine In that case I may be able to set you right again

Rochefoucault He found his peruke a model of perfection tight yet easy not an inch more on one side than on the other The black patch on the forehead—

La Fontaine Black patch too! I would have given a fifteen-sous piece to have caught him with that black patch

Rochefoucault He found it lovely marvellous irresistible Those on each cheek—

La Fontaine Do you tell me he had one on each cheek?

Rochefoucault Symmetrically The cravat was of its proper descent and with its appropriate charge of the best Strasburg snuff upon it. The waistcoat for a moment puzzled and perplexed him He was not quite sure whether the right number of buttons were in their holes nor how many above nor how many below it was the fashion of the week to leave without occupation Such a piece of ignorance is enough to disgrace any courtier on earth He was in the act of striking his forehead

with desperation but he thought of the patch fell on his knees and thanked Heaven for the intervention

La Fontaine Just like him! just like him! good soul!

Rochefoucault The breeches—ah! those require attention all proper every thing in its place —magnificent! The stockings rolled up neither too loosely nor too negligently —a picture! The buckles in the shoes—all but one— soon set to rights — well thought of! And now the sword —ah, that cursed sword! it will bring at least one man to the ground if it has its own way much longer —Up with it! up with it higher!—*Allons!* we are out of danger

La Fontaine Delightful! I have him before my eyes What simplicity! ay what simplicity!

Rochefoucault Now for hat Feather in? Five at least. Bravo

He took up hat and plumage extended his arm to the full length raised it a foot above his head lowered it thereon opened his fingers and let them fall again at his side

La Fontaine Something of the comedian in that ay, M de la Rochefoucault? But on the stage or off, all is natural in Moliere

Rochefoucault Away he went He reached the palace stood before the Dauphin — Oh consternation! Oh despair! "Morbleu! bete que je suis exclaimed the hapless man le livre, où donc est il? You are forcibly struck I perceive, by this adventure of your friend

La Fontaine Strange coincidence! quite unaccountable! There are agents at work in our dreams M de la Rochefoucault, which we shall never see out of them on this side the grave [*To himself*] Sky blue? No —Fleurs de lis? Bah! bah!—Patches? I never wore one in my life

Rochefoucault It well becomes your character for generosity M la Fontaine to look grave and ponder and ejaculate on a friend's untoward accident instead of laughing as those who little know you might expect I beg your pardon for relating the occurrence

La Fontaine Right or wrong, I cannot help laughing any longer Comical by my faith! above the tip top of comedy Excuse my flashes and dashes and rushes of merriment In

controllable! incontrollible! Indeed the laughter is immoderate And you all the while are sitting as grave as judge I mean a criminal one who has nothing to do but to keep up his popularity by sending his rogues to the gallows The civil indeed, have much weighty matter on their minds they must displease one party, and sometimes a doubt arises whether the fairer hand or the fuller shall turn the balance

Rochefoucault I congratulate you on the return of your gravity and composure

La Fontaine Seriously now all my lifetime I have been the plaything of dreams Sometimes they have taken such possession of me that nobody could persuade me afterward they were other than real events Some are very oppressive very painful, M de la Rochefoucault! I have never been able al together to disembarrass my head of the most wonderful vision that ever took possession of any man s There are some truly important differences but in many respects this laughable adven ture of my innocent, honest friend Moliere seemed to have befallen myself I can only account for it by having heard the tale when I was half asleep

Rochefoucault Nothing more probable

La Fontaine You absolutely have relieved me from an in cubus

Rochefoucault I do not yet see how

La Fontaine No longer ago than when you entered this chamber, I would have sworn that I myself had gone to the Louvre, that I myself had been commanded to attend the Dau phin that I myself had come into his presence * had fallen on my knee and cried, "Peste! ou est donc le livre! Ah, M de la Rochefoucault! permit me to embrace you this is really to find a friend at court

Rochefoucault My visit is even more auspicious than I could have ventured to expect it was chiefly for the purpose of asking your permission to make another at my return to Paris I am forced to go into the country on some family affairs, but, hear ing that you have spoken favorably of my *Maxims* I presume to express my satisfaction and delight at your good opinion

La Fontaine Pray, M de la Rochefoucault, do me the

* This happened

favor to continue here a few minutes I would gladly reason with you on some of your doctrines

Rochefoucault For the pleasure of hearing your sentiments on the topics I have treated, I will although it is late, steal a few minutes from the court of which I must take my leave on parting for the province

La Fontaine Are you quite certain that all your Maxims are true or what is of greater consequence that they are all original? I have lately read a treatise written by an English man M Hobbes so loyal a man that while others tell you kings are appointed by God he tells you God is appointed by kings

Roch foucault Ah! such are precisely the men we want If he establishes this verity the rest will follow

La Fontaine He does not seem to care so much about the rest In his treatise I find the ground plan of your chief positions

Rochefoucault I have indeed looked over his publication and we agree on the natural depravity of man

La Fontaine Reconsider your expression It appears to me that what is natural is not depraved —that depravity is deflection from nature Let it pass I cannot however concede to you that the generality of men are naturally bad Badness is accidental, like disease We find more tempers good than bad where proper care is taken in proper time

Rochefoucault Care is not nature

La Fontaine Nature is soon inoperative without it so soon indeed as to allow no opportunity for experiment or hypothesis Life itself requires care and more continually than tempers and morals do The strongest body ceases to be a body in a few days without a supply of food When we speak of men as being naturally bad or good we mean susceptible and retentive and communicative of them In this case (and there can be no other true or ostensible one) I believe that the more are good and nearly in the same proportion as there are animals and plants produced healthy and vigorous than wayward and weakly Strange is the opinion of M Hobbes that, when God hath poured so abundantly his benefits on other creatures, the only one capable of great good should be uniformly disposed to greater evil

Rochefoucault Yet Holy Writ, to which Hobbes would reluctantly appeal, countenances the supposition

La Fontaine The Jews, above all nations were morose and splenetic Nothing is holy to me that lessens in my view the beneficence of my Creator If you could show him ungentle and unkind in a single instance you would render myriads of men so throughout the whole course of their lives, and those too among the most religious The less that people talk about God the better He has left us a design to fill up He has placed the canvas the colours and the pencils within reach his directing hand is over ours incessantly it is our business to follow it, and neither to turn round and argue with our master, nor to kiss and fondle him We must mind our lesson and not neglect our time for the room is closed early, and the lights are suspended in another where no one works If every man would do all the good he might within an hour's walk from his house he would live the happier and the longer for nothing is so conducive to longevity as the union of activity and content But like children, we deviate from the road however well we know it, and run into mire and puddles in despite of frown and ferule

Rochefoucault Go on M la Fontaine! pray go on We are walking in the same labyrinth always within call always within sight of each other We set out at its two extremities, and shall meet at last.

La Fontaine I doubt it From deficiency of care proceed many vices both in men and children and more still from care taken improperly M Hobbes attributes not only the order and peace of society, but equity and moderation and every other virtue, to the coercion and restriction of the laws. The laws, as now constituted, do a great deal of good they also do a great deal of mischief They transfer more property from the right owner in six months than all the thieves of the kingdom do in twelve What the thieves take they soon disseminate abroad again, what the laws take they hoard The thief takes a part of your property, he who prosecutes the thief for you takes another part he who condemns the thief goes to the tax-gatherer and takes the third Power has been hitherto occupied in no employment but in keeping down wisdom Perhaps the time may come when wisdom shall exert her energy in repressing the sallies of power

Rochefoucault I think it more probable that they will agree that they will call together their servants of all liveries to collect what they can lay their hands upon and that meanwhile they will sit together like good housewives making nets from our purses to cover the coop for us If you would be plump and in feather pick up your millet and be quiet in your darkness Speculate on nothing here below and I promise you a nosegay in Paradise

La Fontaine Believe me I shall be most happy to receive it there at your hands my lord duke

The greater number of men I am inclined to think with all the defects of education all the frauds committed on their credulity all the advantages taken of their ignorance and supine ness are disposed on most occasions rather to virtue than to vice rather to the kindly affections than the unkindly rather to the social than the selfish

Rochefoucault Here we differ and were my opinion the same as yours my book would be little read and less commended

La Fontaine Why think so?

Rochefoucault For this reason Every man likes to hear evil of all men every man is delighted to take the air of the common though not a soul will consent to stand within his own allotment No inclosure act! no finger posts! You may call every creature under heaven fool and rogue and your auditor will join with you heartily hint to him the slightest of his own defects or foibles and he draws the rapier You and he are the judges of the world, but not its denizens

La Fontaine M Hobbes has taken advantage of these weaknesses In his dissertation he betrays the timidity and malice of his character It must be granted he reasons well according to the view he has taken of things but he has given no proof whatever that his view is a correct one I will believe that it is when I am persuaded that sickness is the natural state of the body, and health the unnatural If you call him a sound philosopher you may call a mummy a sound man Its darkness, its hardness its forced uprightness and the place in which you find it, may commend it to you give me rather some weakness and peccability, with vital warmth and human sympathies A shrewd reasoner is one thing, a sound philosopher is another

I admire your power and precision Monks will admonish us how little the author of the *Maxims* knows of the world and heads of colleges will cry out 'A libel on human nature!' but when they hear your titles and above all your credit at court, they will cast back cowl and periuke and lick your boots You start with great advantages Throwing off from a dukedom you are sure of enjoying, if not the tongue of these puzzlers, the full cry of the more animating and will certainly be as long lived as the imperfection of our language will allow I consider your *Maxims* as a broken ridge of hills, on the shady side of which you are fondest of taking your exercise but the same ridge hath also a sunny one You attribute (let me say it again) all actions to self interest Now a sentiment of interest must be preceded by calculation long or brief right or erroneous Tell me, then, in what region lies the origin of that pleasure which a family in the country feels on the arrival of an unexpected friend I say a family in the country because the sweetest souls like the sweetest flowers soon canker in cities, and no purity is rarer there than the purity of delight if I may judge from the few examples I have been in a position to see no earthly one can be greater There are pleasures which lie near the surface and which are blocked up by artificial ones or are diverted by some mechanical scheme, or are confined by some stiff evergreen vista of low advantage But these pleasures do occasionally burst forth in all their brightness and if ever you shall by chance find one of them, you will sit by it, I hope, complacently and cheerfully and turn toward it the kindliest aspect of your meditations

Rochefoucault Many, indeed most people, will differ from me Nothing is quite the same to the intellect of any two men, much less of all When one says to another "I am entirely of your opinion he uses in general an easy and indifferent phrase believing in its accuracy without examination, without thought The nearest resemblance in opinions, if we could trace every line of it, would be found greatly more divergent than the nearest in the human form or countenance, and in the same proportion as the varieties of mental qualities are more numerous and fine than of the bodily Hence, I do not expect nor wish that my opinions should in all cases be

similar to those of others but in many I shall be gratified if by just degrees and after a long survey, those of others approximate to mine Nor does this my sentiment spring from a love of power as in many good men quite unconsciously when they would make proselytes —since I shall see few and converse with fewer of them and profit in no way by their adherence and favor —but it springs from a natural and a cultivated love of all truths whatever and from a certainty that these delivered by me are conducive to the happiness and dignity of man You shake your head

La Fontaine Make it out

Rochefoucault I have pointed out to him at what passes he hath deviated from his true interest and where he hath mistaken selfishness for generosity coldness for judgment contraction of heart for policy rank for merit pomp for dignity — of all mistakes the commonest and the greatest. I am accused of paradox and distortion On paradox I shall only say that every new moral truth has been called so Inexperienced and negligent observers see no difference in the operations of ravelling and unravelling they never come close enough they despise plain work

La Fontaine The more we simplify things, the better we descry their substances and qualities A good writer will not coil them up and press them into the narrowest possible space nor macerate them into such particles that nothing shall be remaining of their natural contexture You are accused of this too, by such as have forgotten your title page, and who look for treatises where maxims only have been promised Some of them perhaps are spinning out sermons and dissertations from the poorest paragraph in the volume

Rochefoucault Let them copy and write as they please against or for, modestly or impudently I have hitherto had no assailant who is not of too slender a make to be detained an hour in the stocks he has unwarily put his foot into If you hear of any, do not tell of them On the subjects of my remarks, had others thought as I do, my labor would have been spared me I am ready to point out the road where I know it to whosoever wants it, but I walk side by side with few or none

La Fontaine We usually like those roads which show us the

fronts of our friends houses and the pleasure-grounds about them and the smooth garden walks and the trim espaliers and look at them with more satisfaction than at the docks and nettles that are thrown in heaps behind The *Offices* of Cicero are imperfect yet who would not rather guide his children by them than by the line and compass of harder handed guides such as Hobbes for instance

Rochefoucault Imperfect as some gentlemen in hoods may call the *Offices* no founder of a philosophical or of a religious sect has been able to add to them any thing important

La Fontaine Pity that Cicero carried with him no better authorities than reason and humanity! He neither could work miracles nor damn you for disbelieving them Had he lived fourscore years later who knows but he might have been another Simon Peter and have talked Hebrew as fluently as Latin all at once! Who knows but we might have heard of his patrimony! Who knows but our venerable popes might have claimed dominion from him as descendant from the kings of Rome!

Rochefoucault The hint some centuries ago would have made your fortune and that saintly cat there would have kittened in a mitre

La Fontaine Alas! the hint could have done nothing Cicero could not have lived later

Rochefoucault I warrant him Nothing is easier to correct than chronology There is not a lady in Paris nor a jockey in Normandy that is not eligible to a professor's chair in it I have seen a man's ancestor, whom nobody ever saw before spring back over twenty generations Our Vatican Jupiters have as little respect for old Chronos as the Cretan had they mutilate him when and where they think necessary, limp as he may by the operation

La Fontaine When I think as you make me do, how ambitious men are even those whose teeth are too loose (one would fancy) for a bite at so hard an apple as the devil of ambition offers them, I am inclined to believe that we are actuated not so much by selfishness as you represent it, but under another form, — the love of power Not to speak of territorial dominion or political office, and such other things as we usually class under its appurtenances, do we not desire an exclusive control over what is

beautiful and lovely —the possession of pleasant fields of well-situated houses of cabinets of images of pictures and indeed of many things pleasant to see but useless to possess even of rocks of streams and of fountains? These things, you will tell me have their utility True, but not to the wisher nor does the idea of it enter his mind Do not we wish that the object of our love should be devoted to us only and that our children should love us better than their brothers and sisters or even than the mother who bore them? Love would be arrayed in the purple robe of sovereignty mildly as he may resolve to exercise his power

Rochefoucault Many things which appear to be incontrovertible are such for their age only and must yield to others which, in their age are equally so There are only a few points that are always above the waves Plain truths like plain dishes are commended by everybody and everybody leaves them whole If it were not even more impertinent and presumptuous to praise a great writer in his presence than to censure him in his absence I would venture to say that your prose from the few specimens you have given of it is equal to your verse Yet even were I the possessor of such a style as yours, I would never employ it to support my *Maxims* You would think a writer very impudent and self sufficient who should quote his own works to defend them is doing more We are the worst auxiliaries in the world to the opinions we have brought into the field Our business is to measure the ground and to calculate the forces then let them try their strength If the weak assails me, he thinks me weak if the strong he thinks me strong He is more likely to compute all his own vigor than mine At all events I love inquiry even when I myself sit down And I am not offended in my walks if my visitor asks me whither does that alley lead? It proves that he is ready to go on with me that he sees some spice before him, and that he believes there may be something worth looking after

La Fontaine You have been standing a long time my lord duke I must entreat you to be seated

Rochefoucault Excuse me, my dear M la Fontaine I would much rather stand

La Fontaine Mercy on us! have you been upon your legs ever since you rose to leave me

Rochefoucault A change of position is agreeable a friend always permits it

La Fontaine Sad doing! said oversight! The other two chairs were sent yesterday evening to be scoured and mended But that dog is the best tempered dog an angel of a dog I do assure you he would have gone down in a moment at a word I am quite ashamed of myself for such inattention With your sentiments of friendship for me why could you not have taken the liberty to shove him gently off rather than give me this uneasiness?

Rochefoucault My true and kind friend! we authors are too sedentary we are heartily glad of standing to converse whenever we can do it without any restraint on our acquaintance

La Fontaine I must reprove that animal when he uncurls his body He seems to be dreaming of Paradise and Houris Ay twitch thy ear my child! I wish at my heart there were as troublesome a fly about the other God forgive me! The rogue covers all my clean linen!—shirt and cravat! What cares he!

Rochefoucault Dogs are not very modest

La Fontaine Never say that M de la Rochefoucault! The most modest people upon earth! Look at a dog's eyes and he half-closes them or gently turns them away with a motion of the lips which he licks languidly and of the tail, which he stirs tremulously begging your forbearance I am neither blind nor indifferent to the defects of these good and generous creatures. They are subject to many such as men are subject to among the rest, they disturb the neighborhood in the discussion of their private causes, they quarrel and fight on small motives such as a little bad food, or a little vain glory of the sex But it must be something present or near that excites them and they calculate not the extent of evil they may do or suffer

Rochefoucault Certainly not how should dogs calculate?

La Fontaine I know nothing of the process I am unable to inform you how they leap over hedges and brooks, with exertion just sufficient, and no more In regard to honor and a sense of dignity, let me tell you, a dog accepts the subsidies of his friends, but never claims them A dog would not take the field to obtain power for a son, but would leave the son to obtain it by his own activity and prowess He conducts his visitor or inmate

out a-hunting and make a present of the game to him as freely as an emperor to an elector Fond as he is of slumber —which is indeed one of the pleasantest and best things in the universe particularly after dinner —he shakes it off as willingly as he would a giddy in order to defend his master from theft or violence Let the robber or a sailant speak as courteously as he may he waives your diplomatical terms gives his reasons in plain language and makes war I could say many other things to his advantage but I never was malicious and would rather let both parties plead for themselves give me the dog however

Rochefoucault Truth! I will give you both and never boast of my largess in so doing

La Fontaine I trust I have removed from you the suspicion of selfishness in my client and I feel it quite as easy to make a proper disposal of another ill attribute —namely cruelty,— which we vainly try to shuffle off our own shoulders upon other by employing the offensive and most unjust term brutality But to convince you of my impartiality now I have defended the dog from the first obloquy I will defend the man from the last hoping to make you think better of each What you attribute to cruelty both while we are children and afterward may be assigned for the greater part to curiosity Cruelty tends to the extinction of life, the dissolution of matter the imprisonment and sepulture of truth and if it were our ruling ad chief propensity the human race would have been extinguished in a few centuries after its appearance Curiosity in its primary sense, implies care and consideration

Rochefoucault Words often deflect from their primary sense We find the most curious men the most idle and silly the least observant and conservative

La Fontaine So we think because we see every hour the idly curious, and not the strenuously we see only the persons of the one set and only the works of the other

More is heard of cruelty than of curiosity, because while curiosity is silent both in itself and about its object cruelty on most occasion is like the wind —boisterous in itself and exciting a murmur and bustle in all the things it moves among Added to which, many of the higher topics whereto our curiosity would turn, are intercepted from it by the policy of our

guides and rulers while the principal ones on which cruelty is most active are pointed to by the sceptre and the truncheon, and wealth and dignity are the rewards of their attainment What perversion! He who brings a bullock into a city for its sustenance is called a butcher and nobody has the civility to take off the hat to him although knowing him as perfectly as I know Matthieu le Mince who served me with those fine kidneys you must have remarked in passing through the kitchen on the contrary he who reduces the same city to famine is styled M le General or M le Marechal and gentlemen like you unprejudiced (as one would think) and upright make room for him in the antechamber

Rochefoucault He obeys orders without the degrading influence of any passion

La Fontaine Then he commits a baseness the more a cruelty the greater He goes off at another man's setting as ingloriously as a rat trap he produces the worst effects of fury and feels none — a Cain unirritated by a brother's incense

Rochefoucault I would hide from you this little rapier, which, like the barber's pole, I have often thought too obtrusive in the streets

La Fontaine Never shall I think my countrymen half civilized while on the dress of a courtier is hung the instrument of a cut throat How deplorably feeble must be that honor which requires defending at every hour of the day!

Rochefoucault Ingenious as you are M la Fontaine I do not believe that on this subject, you could add any thing to what you have spoken already but really I do think one of the most instructive things in the world would be a dissertation on dress by you

La Fontaine Nothing can be devised more commodious than the dress in fashion Perukes have fallen among us by the peculiar dispensation of Providence As in all the regions of the globe the indigenous have given way to stronger creatures, so have they (partly at least) on the human head At present the wren and the squirrel are dominant there Whenever I have a mind for a filbert, I have only to shake my foretop Improvement does not end in that quarter I might forget to take my

pinch of snuff when it would do me good, unless I saw a store of it on another's cravat Furthermore the slit in the coat behind tells in a moment what it was made for —a thing of which, in regard to ourselves, the best preachers have to remind us all our lives Then the central part of our habilment has either its loophole or its portcullis in the opposite direction, still more demonstrative All these are for very mundane purposes but religion and humanity have whispered some later utilities We pray the more commodiously and of course the more frequently, for rolling up a royal ell of stocking round about our knees and our high heeled shoes must surely have been worn by some angel to save those insects which the flat footed would have crushed to death

Rochefoucault Ah! the good dog has awakened he saw me and my apiece and ran away Of what breed is he? for I know nothing of dogs

La Fontaine And write so well!

Rochefoucault Is he a truffier?

La Fontaine No not he but quite as innocent

Rochefoucault Something of the shepherd-dog I suspect?

La Fontaine Not that neither although he fain would make you believe it Indeed he is very like one pointed nose, pointed ears apparently stiff but readily yielding long hair particularly about the neck a noble tail over his back three curls deep exceedingly pleasant to stroke down a gun straw color all above white all below He might take it ill if you looked for it, but so it is upon my word An ermeline might envy it

Rochefoucault What are his pursuits?

La Fontaine As to pursuit and occupation, he is good for nothing In fact, I like those dogs best, —and those men too

Rochefoucault Send Nanon then, for a pair of silk stockings and mount my carriage with me it stops at the Louvre

XXII MELANCTHON AND CALVIN [1]

Calvin Are you sure, O Melancthon that you yourself are among the elect?

Melancthon My dear brother, so please it God I would rather be among the many

Calvin Of the damned?

Melancthon Alas! no But I am inclined to believe that the many will be saved and will be happy since Christ came into the world for the redemption of sinners

Calvin Hath not our Saviour said explicitly that many are called but few chosen?

Melancthon Our Saviour?—hath he said it?

Calvin *Hath* he forsooth! Where is your New Testament?

Melancthon In my heart

Calvin Without this page however

Melancthon When we are wiser and more docile that is when we are above the jars and turmoils and disputations of the world,—our Saviour will vouchsafe to interpret what through the fumes of our intemperate vanity is now indistinct or dark He will plead for us before no inexorable judge He came to remit the sins of man not the sins of a few but of many not the sins of many but of all

Calvin What! of the benighted heathen too?—of the pagan? of the idolater?

Melancthon I hope so, but I dare not say it

Calvin You would include even the negligent the indifferent, the sceptic, the unbeliever

Melancthon Pitying them for a want of happiness in a want of faith They are my brethren they are God's children He will pardon the presumption of my wishes for their welfare my sorrow that they have fallen some through their blindness, others through their deafness, others through their terror, others through their anger peradventure at the loud denunciations of unforgiving man If I would forgive a brother may not he, who is im-

[1] Works II 1846 Works V 1876]

measurably better and more merciful have pity on a child? He came on earth to take our nature upon him will he punish will he reprehend us for an attempt to take as much as may be of his upon ourselves?

Calvin There is no bearing any such fallacies

Melancthon Is it harder to bear these fallacies (as they appear to you, and perhaps are for we all are fallible, and many even of our best thoughts are fallacies) —is it harder O my friend to bear these than to believe in the eternal punishment of the erroneous?

Calvin *Erroneous* indeed! Have they not the Book of Life now at last laid open before them for their guidance?

Melancthon No indeed they have only two or three places dog-eared and bedaubed which they are commanded to look into and study These are so unmeaning that many close again the volume of salvation clasp it tight and throw it back in our faces

I would rather show a man green fields than gibbets and if I called him to enter the service of a plenteous house and powerful master he may not be rendered the more willing to enter it by my pointing out to him the stocks in the gateway and telling him that nine tenths of the household however orderly must occupy that position The book of *good news* under your interpretation, tells people not only that they *may* go and be damned but that unless they are lucky they *must* inevitably Again it informs another set of inquirers that if once they have been under what they feel to be the influence of grace they never can relapse All must go well who have once gone well and a name once written in the list of favorites can never be erased

Calvin This is certain

Melancthon Let us hope, then and in holy confidence let us believe that the book is large and voluminous that it begins at an early date of man's existence and that amid the agitation of inquiry, it comprehends the humble and submissive doubter For doubt itself between the richest patrimony and utter destitution is quite sufficiently painful and surely it is a hardship to be turned over into a criminal court for having lost in a civil one But if all who have once gone right can never go astray, how happens it that so large a part of the angels fell off from their allegiance? They were purer and wiser than we are,

and had the advantage of seeing God face to face They were the ministers of his power they knew its extent, yet they defied it. If we err it is in relying too confidently on his mercies not in questioning his omnipotence If our hopes forsake us if the bonds of sin bruise and corrode us so that we cannot walk upright, there is in the midst of these calamities, no proof that we are utterly lost Danger far greater is there in the presumption of an especial favor which men incomparably better than ourselves can never have deserved Let us pray O Calvin that we may hereafter be happier than our contentions and animosities will permit us to be at present and that our opponents whether now in the right or in the wrong may come at last where all error ceases

Calvin I am uncertain whether such a wish is rational and I doubt more whether it is religious God hath willed them to walk in their blindness To hope against it seems like repining at his unalterable decree — a weak indulgence in an unpermitted desire an unholy entreaty of the heart that he will forego his vengeance, and abrogate the law that was from the beginning Of one thing I am certain we must lop off the unsound

Melancthon What a curse hath metaphor been to religion! It is the wedge that holds asunder the two great portions of the Christian world We hear of nothing so commonly as fire and sword And here indeed, what was metaphor is converted into substance and applied to practice The unsoundness of doctrine is not cut off nor cauterised the professor is The head falls on the scaffold, or fire surrounds the stake because a doctrine is bloodless and incombustible Fierce outrageous animals for want of the man who has escaped them lacerate and trample his cloak or bonnet This, although the work of brutes, is not half so brutal as the practice of theologians,—seizing the man himself, instead of bonnet or cloak

Calvin We must leave such matters to the magistrate

Melancthon Let us instruct the magistrate in his duty this is ours Unless we can teach humanity, we may resign the charge of religion For fifteen centuries Christianity has been conveyed into many houses, in many cities in many regions, but always through slender pipes and never yet into any great reservoir in any part of the earth Its principal ordinances have never been

observed in the polity of any State whatever Abstinence from spoliation, from oppression from bloodshed has never been inculcated by the chief priests of any These two facts excite the doubts of many in regard to a Divine origin and a Divine protection Wherefore it behooves us the more especially to preach forbearance If the people are tolerant one toward another in the same country they will become tolerant in time toward those whom rivers or seas have separated from them For, surely it is strange and wonderful that nations which are near enough for hostility should never be near enough for concord This arises from bad government and bad government arises from a negligent choice of counsellors by the prince, usually led or terrified by a corrupt ambitious wealthy (and therefore un Christian) priesthood While their wealth lay beyond the visible horizon, they tarried at the cottage instead of pricking on for the palace

Calvin By the grace and help of God we will turn them back again to their quiet and wholesome resting place before the people lay a rough hand upon the silk

But you evaded my argument on predestination

Melancthon Our blessed Lord himself in his last hours ventured to express a wish before his Heavenly Father that the bitter cup might pass away from him I humbly dare to implore that a cup much bitterer may be removed from the great body of mankind —a cup containing the poison of eternal punishment where agony succeeds to agony but never death

Calvin I come armed with the gospel

Melancthon Tremendous weapon!—as we have seen it through many ages if man wields it against man but like the fabled spear of old mythology, endued with the faculty of healing the saddest wound its most violent wielder can inflict Obscured and rusting with the blood upon it, let us hasten to take it up again, and apply it as best we may to its appointed uses

The life of our Saviour is the simplest exposition of his words Strife is what he both discountenanced and forbade We ourselves are right minded, each of us all and others are right-minded in proportion as they agree with us chiefly in matters which we insist are well worthy of our adherence, but which whosoever refuses to embrace displays a factious and un-Christian spirit These for the most part are matters which

neither they nor we understand, and which if we did understand them, would little profit us The weak will be supported by the strong if they can if they cannot, they are ready to be supported even by the weaker and cry out against the strong as arrogant or negligent or deaf or blind it is not even then strength is questioned and the more if while there is fury all around them, they are quiet

I remember no discussion on religion in which religion was not a sufferer by it if mutual forbearance and belief in another's good motives and intentions are (as I must always think they are) its proper and necessary appurtenances

Calvin Would you never make inquiries?

Melancthon Yes and as deep as possible but into my own heart for that belongs to me and God hath entrusted it most especially to my own superintendence

Calvin We must also keep others from going astray by showing them the right road and if they are obstinate in resistance then by coercing and chastising them through the magistrate

Melancthon It is sorrowful to dream that we are scourges in God's hand and that he appoints for us no better work than laceration one another I am no enemy to inquiry where I see abuses and where I suspect falsehood The Romanists, our great oppressors think it presumptuous to search into things abstruse and let us do them the justice to acknowledge that, if it is a fault, it is one which they never commit But surely we are kept sufficiently in the dark by the infirmity of our nature no need to creep into a corner and put our hands before our eyes To throw away or turn aside from God's best gifts is verily a curious sign of obedience and submission. He not only hath given us a garden to walk in, but he hath planted it also for us and he wills us to know the nature and properties of every thing that grows up within it. Unless we look into them and handle them and register them, how shall we discover this to be salutary, that to be poisonous, this annual, that perennial?

Calvin Here we coincide and I am pleased to find in you less apathy than I expected It becomes us, moreover, to denounce God's vengeance on a sinful world

Melancthon Is it not better and pleasanter to show the wanderer by what course of life it may be avoided? Is it not better and pleasanter to enlarge on God's promises of salvation than to insist on his denunciations of wrath? Is it not better and pleasanter to lead the wretched up to his mercy seat than to hurl them by thousands under his fiery chariot?

Calvin We have no option By our Heavenly Father many are called but few are chosen

Melancthon There is scarcely a text in the Holy Scriptures to which there is not an opposite text written in character equally large and legible and there has usually been a sword laid upon each Even the weakest disputant is made so conceited by what he calls religion as to think himself wiser than the wisest who thinks differently from him and he becomes so ferocious by what he calls holding it fast that he appears to me as if he held it fast much in the same manner as a terrier holds a rat, and you have about as much trouble in getting it from between his incisors When at last it does come out, it is mangled distorted and extinct

Calvin M Melancthon you have taken a very perverse view of the subject Such language as yours would extinguish that zeal which is to enlighten the nations and to consume the tares by which they are overrun

Melancthon The tares and the corn are so intermingled throughout the wide plain which our God hath given us to cultivate that I would rather turn the patient and humble into it to weed it carefully than a thresher who would thresh wheat and tare together before the grain is ripened or who would carry fire into the furrows when it is

Calvin Yet even the most gentle and of the gentler sex are inflamed with a holy zeal in the propagation of the faith

Melancthon I do not censure them for their earnestness in maintaining truth We not only owe our birth to them but also the better part of our education and if we were not divided after their first lesson, we should continue to live in a widening circle of brothers and sisters all our lives After our infancy and removal from home, the use of the rod is the principal thing we learn of our alien preceptors and, catching their dictatorial language we soon begin to exercise their instru-

ment of enforcing it and swing it right and left, even after we are paralyzed by age and until death's hand strikes it out of ours I am sorry you have cited the gentler part of the creation to appear before you obliged as I am to bear witness that I myself have known a few specimens of the fair sex become a shade less fair among the perplexities of religion Indeed I am credibly informed that certain of them have lost their patience running up and down in the dust where many roads diverge This surely is not walking humbly with their God nor walking with him at all, for those who walk with him are always readier to hear *his* voice than their own and to admit that it is more persuasive But at last the zealot is so infatuated by the serious mockeries he imitates and repeats that he really takes his own voice for God's Is it not wonderful that the words of eternal life should have hitherto produced only eternal hatred and that in our progress heavenward we should think it expedient to plant unthrifty thorns over bitter wells of blood in the wilderness we leave behind us?

Calvin It appears to me that you are inclined to tolerate even the rank idolatry of our persecutors Shame! shame!

Melancthon Greater shame if I tolerated it within my own dark heart, and waved before it the foul incense of self love

Calvin I do not understand you What I do understand is this and deny it at your peril —I mean at the peril of your salvation —that God is a jealous God he himself declares it

Melancthon We are in the habit of considering the God of Nature as a jealous God, and idolatry is an enormous evil —an evil which is about to come back into the world and to subdue or seduce once more our strongest and most sublime affections Why do you lift up your eyes and hands?

Calvin An evil *about* to come back!—*about* to come! Do we not find it in high places?

Melancthon We do indeed, and always shall, while there are any high places upon earth Thither will men creep and there fall prostrate

Calvin Against idolatry we still implore the Almighty that he will incline our hearts to keep his law

Melancthon The Jewish law the Jewish idolatry you fear the approach of this, and do not suspect the presence of a worse

Calvin A worse than that which the living God hath denounced?

Melancthon Even so

Calvin Would it not offend would it not wound to the quick, a mere human creature to be likened to a piece of metal or stone a calf or monkey?

Melancthon A mere human creature might be angry because his influence among his neighbours arises in great measure from the light in which he appears to them and this light does not emanate from himself but may be thrown on him by any hand that is expert at mischief Beside the likeness of such animals to him could never be suggested by reverence or esteem nor be regarded as a type of any virtue The mere human creature such as human creatures for the most part are would be angry because he has nothing which he can oppose to ridicule but resentment

Calvin I am in consternation at your lukewarmness If you treat idolatries thus lightly what hope can I entertain of discussing with you the doctrine of grace and predestination?

Melancthon Entertain no such hope at all Wherever I find in the Holy Scriptures a disputable doctrine I interpret it as judges do in favor of the culprit such is man The benevolent judge is God But, in regard to idolatry I see more criminals who are guilty of it than you do I go beyond the stone quarry and the pasture beyond the graven image and the ox stall If we bow before the distant image of good while there exists within our reach one solitary object of substantial sorrow which sorrow our efforts can remove we are guilty (I pronounce it) of idolatry we prefer the intangible effigy to the living form Surely we neglect the service of our Maker if we neglect his children He left us in the chamber with them, to take care of them, to feed them to admonish them and occasionally to amuse them instead of which after a warning not to run into the fire we slam the door behind us in their faces, and run eagerly down stairs to dispute and quarrel with our fellows of the household who are about their business The wickedness of idolatry does not consist in any inadequate representation of the Deity for, whether our hands or our hearts represent him the representation is almost always inadequate Every man does what he hopes and

believes will be most pleasing to his God and God in his wisdom and mercy will not punish gratitude in its error

Calvin How do you know that?

Melancthon Because I know his loving kindness, and experience it daily

Calvin If men blindly and wilfully run into error when God hath shown the right way, he will visit it on their souls

Melancthon He will observe from the serenity of heaven—a serenity emanating from his presence—that there is scarcely any work of his creation on earth which hath not excited, in some people or other a remembrance an admiration a symbol of his power The evil of idolatry is this Rival nations have raised up rival deities war hath been denounced in the name of Heaven men have been murdered for the love of God and such impiety hath darkened all the regions of the world, that the Lord of all things hath been invoked by all simultaneously as the Lord of hosts This is the only invocation in which men of every creed are united,—an invocation to which Satan bent on the perdition of the human race might have listened from the fallen angels

Calvin We cannot hope to purify men's hearts until we lead them away from the abomination of Babylon nor will they be led away from it until we reduce the images to dust So long as they stand, the eye will hanker after them and the spirit be corrupt

Melancthon And long afterward I sadly fear

We attribute to the weakest of men the appellations and powers of Deity we fall down before them we call the impious and cruel by the title of *gracious* and *most religious* and even in the house of God himself and before his very altar we split his Divine Majesty asunder and offer the largest part to the most corrupt and most corrupting of his creatures

Calvin Not *we* M Melancthon I will preach, I will exist in no land of such abomination

Melancthon So far well but religion demands more Our reformers knock off the head from Jupiter thunderbolt and sceptre stand The attractive the impressive the august, they would annihilate, leaving men nothing but their sordid fears of vindictive punishment, and their impious doubts of our Saviour's promises.

Calvin We should teach men to retain for ever the fear of God before their eyes never to cease from the apprehension of his wrath to be well aware that he often inflicts when he is farthest from wrath and that such infliction is a benefit bestowed by him

Melancthon What! if only a few are to be saved when the infliction is over?

Calvin It becometh not us to repine at the number of vessel which the supremely wise Artificer forms breaks and casts away or at the paucity at pleaseth him to preserve The ways of Providence are inscrutable

Melancthon Some of them are and some of them are not and in these it seems to be his design that we should see and adore his wisdom We fancy that all our inflictions are sent us directly and immediately from above sometimes we think it in piety and contrition but oftener in moroseness and discontent It would however be well if we attempted to trace the causes of them We should probably find their origin in some region of the heart which we never had well explored or in which we had secretly deposited our worst indulgence The clouds that intercept the heavens from us come not from the heavens but from the earth

Why should we scribble our own devices over the Book of God, erasing the plainest words and reddening the Holy Scriptures a worthless palimpsest? Cannot we agree to show the nations of the world that the whole of Christianity is practicable although the better parts never have been practised no—not even by the priesthood—in any single one of them? Bishops confessors, saints martyrs have never denounced to king or people nor ever have attempted to delay or mitigate the most accursed of crimes the crime of Cain,—the crime indeed whereof Cain was only a germ —the crime of fratricide with war devastating depopulating soul slaughtering, heaven defying, with Alas! the gentle call of mercy sounds feebly and soon dies away leaving no trace on the memory but the swelling cries of vengeance in which we believe we imitate the voice of Heaven run and reverberate in loud peals and multiplied echoes along the whole vault of the brain All the main shalen by them and he shakes all the earth

Calvin! I beseech you do you who guide and govern so many do you (whatever others may) spare your brethren Doubtful as I am of lighter texts blown backward and forward at the opening of opposite windows I am convinced and certain of one grand immovable verity It sounds strange it sounds contradictory

Calvin I am curious to hear it.

Melancthon You shall! This is the tenet There is nothing on earth divine beside humanity

XXIII GALILEO MILTON, AND A DOMINICAN[1]

Milton Friend! let me pass

Dominican Whither? To whom?

Milton Into the prison to Galileo Galilei

Dominican Prison! We have no prison here!

Milton No prison here! What sayest thou?

Dominican Son! For heretical pravity indeed and some other less atrocious crimes we have a seclusion a confinement a penitentiary we have a locality for softening the obdurate and furnishing them copiously with reflection and recollection but prison we have none

Milton Open!

Dominican (*to himself*) What sweetness! what authority! what a form! what an attitude! what a voice!

Milton Open! Delay me no longer

Dominican In whose name?

Milton In the name of humanity and of God

Dominican My sight staggers the walls shake he must be —do angels ever come hither?

Milton Be reverent and stand apart [*To Galileo*] Pardon me, sir, an intrusion

[1 At the date of Milton's journey into Italy Galileo had been for some time free from actual imprisonment He was living at Arcetri near Florence His blindness was just become complete (Works ii., 1846 Works v 1876)]

Galileo Young man! if I may judge by your voice and manner, you are little apt to ask pardon or to want it I am as happy at hearing you as you seem unhappy at seeing me I perceive at once that you are an Englishman

Milton I am

Galileo Speak then freely and I will speak freely too In no other man's presence for these many years —indeed from my very childhood —have I done it

Milton Sad fate for any man! most sad for one like you!—the follower of truth the companion of reason in her wanderings on earth!

Galileo We live among priests and princes and empoisoners Your dog by his growling seems to be taking up the quarrel against them

Milton We think and feel alike in many things I have observed that the horses and dogs of every country bear a resemblance in character to the men We English have a wonderful variety of both creatures To begin with the horses some are remarkable for strength others for spirit while in France there is little diversity of race —all are noisy and windy skittish and mordacious prancing and libidinous fit only for a rope and fond only of a ribbon Where the ribbon is not to be had the jowl of a badger will do any thing but what is native to the creature is a decoration In Flanders, you find them slow and safe tractable and substantial In Italy there are few good for work none for battle many for light carriages for standing at doors and for every kind of street work

Galileo Do let us get among the dogs

Milton In France they are finely combed and pert and pettish ready to bite if hurt and to fondle if caressed without fear without animosity without affection In Italy they creep and shiver and rub their skins against you and insinuate their slender beaks into the patronage of your hand and lick it and look up modestly, and whine decorously and supplicate with grace The moment you give them anything, they grow importunate and the moment you refuse them they bite In Spain and England the races are similar so indeed are those of the men Spaniards are Englishmen in an ungrafted state,—however, with this great difference that the English have ever been the

least cruel of nations excepting the Swedes and the Spaniards the most cruel excepting the French Then they were under one and the same religion the most sanguinary and sordid of all the institutions that ever pressed upon mankind

Galileo To the dogs to the dogs again be they of what breed they may!

Milton The worst of them could never have driven you up into this corner merely because he had been dreaming and you had disturbed his dream How long shall this endure?

Galileo I sometimes ask God how long I should repine and almost despair, in putting the question to myself or another

Milton Be strong in him through reason his great gift

Galileo I fail not, and shall not fail I can fancy that the heaviest link in my heavy chain has dropped off me since you entered

Milton Let me then praise our God for it! Not those alone are criminal who placed you here but those no less who left unto them the power of doing it If the learned and intelligent in all the regions of Europe would unite their learning and intellect and would exert their energy in disseminating the truth throughout the countries they inhabit soon must the ignorant and oppressive now at the summit of power resign their offices and the most versatile nations after this purifying and perfect revolution rest for ages But bursting from their collegiate kennels, they range and hunt only for their masters and are content at last to rear up and catch the offal thrown among them negligently and often too with scourges on their cringing spines, as they scramble for it Do they run through mire and thorns do they sweat from their tongues ends do they breathe out blood for this? The Dominican is looking in not to interrupt us I hope for my idle exclamation

Galileo Continue to speak generously rationally and in Latin, and he will not understand one sentence The fellow is the most stupid the most superstitious the most hard hearted, and the most libidinous in the confraternity He is usually at my door, that he may not be at others where he would be more in the way of his superiors. You Englishmen are inclined to melancholy but what makes you so very grave, so much graver than before?

Milton I hardly know which is more afflicting—to hear the loudest expression of intolerable anguish from the weak who are sinking under it or to witness an aged and venerable man bearing up against his sufferings with unshaken constancy And alas that blindness should consummate your sufferings!

Galileo There are worse evils than blindness and the best men suffer most by them The spirit of liberty now rising up in your country will excite a blind enthusiasm, and leave behind a bitter disappointment Vicious men will grow popular and the interests of the nation will be entrusted to them because they descend from their station in order as they say to serve you

Milton Profligate impostors We know there are such among us but truth shall prevail against them

Galileo In argument truth always prevails finally in politics falsehood always else would never States fall into decay Even good men if indeed good men will ever mix with evil ones for any purpose take up the trade of politics at first intending to deal honestly the calm bower of the conscience is soon converted into the booth of inebriating popularity the shouts of the multitude then grow unexciting then indifferent then troublesome lastly the riotous supporters of the condescendent fill ing half asleep he looks agape in their faces springs upon his legs again flings the door behind him and escapes in the livery of Power When Satan would have led our Saviour into temptation he did not conduct him where the looser passions were wandering he did not conduct him amid flowers and herbage where a fall would have only been a soiling to our frail human nature no he led him up to an exceedingly high mountain and showed him palaces and towers and treasuries knowing that it was by those alone that he himself could have been so utterly lost to rectitude and beatitude Our Saviour spurned the temptation, and the greatest of his miracles was accomplished After which even the father of lies never ventured to dispute his divine nature

Dominican I must not suffer you to argue on theology you may pervert the young man

Milton In addition to confinement, must this fungus of vapid folly stain your cell? If so let me hope you have re-

ceived the assurance that the term of your imprisonment will be short

Galileo It may be or not as God wills it is for life

Milton For life!

Galileo Even so I regret that I cannot go forth and my depression is far below regret when I think that if ever I should be able to make a discovery the world is never to derive the benefit I love the fields and the country air and the sunny sky, and the starry and I could keep my temper when, in the midst of my calculations the girls brought me flowers from lonely places and asked me their names, and puzzled me But now I feel less a compulsory solitude should have rendered me a little morose! And yet methinks I could bear again a stalk to be thrown in my face as a deceiver for calling the blossom that had been on it Andromeda and could pardon as easily as ever a slap on the shoulder for my Ursa Major Pleiads not Arcetri!

Milton I often walk along its quiet lanes somewhat too full of the white efflorescence in the narrower parts of them They are so long and pliant a little wind is enough to blow them in the face and they scratch as much as their betters

Galileo Pleasant Arcetri!

Milton The sigh that rises at the thought of a friend may be almost as genial as his voice 'Tis a breath that seems rather to come from him than from ourselves

Galileo I sighed not at my thought of friendship How do I know that my friend is left me? I was thinking that in those unfrequented lanes the birds that were frightened could fly away Pleasant Arcetri! Well we (I mean those who are not blind) can see the stars from all places we may know that there are other worlds and we may hope that there are happier So, then you often walk to that village?

Milton Oftener to Fiesole

Galileo You like Fiesole better?

Milton Must I confess it? For a walk I do

Galileo So did I —so did I What friends we are already! I made some observations from Fiesole

Milton I shall remember it on my return and shall revisit the scenery with fresh delight Alas! is this a promise I can keep, when I must think of you here?

Galileo My good compassionate young man! I am concerned that my apartment allows you so little space to walk about

Milton Could ever I have been guilty of such disrespect! O sir far remote far beyond all others is that sentiment from my heart! It swelled and put every sinew of every limb into motion at your indignity No no! Suffer me still to bend in reverence and humility on this hand now stricken with years and with captivity!—on this hand which science has followed which God himself has guided and before which all the worlds above us, in all their magnitudes and distances have been thrown open

Galileo Ah my too friendly enthusiast! my years do more and with impunity

Milton At least be it instrumental in removing from the earth a few of her heaviest curses a few of her oldest and worst impediments to liberty and wisdom—mitres tiaras crowns and the trumpery whereon they rest I know but two genera of men—the annual and the perennial Those who die down, and leave behind them no indication of the places whereon they grow are cognate with the gross matter about them those on the contrary who rise after their departure are able to sustain the lowliest and to exalt the highest—those are surely the spirits of God, both when upon earth and when with him What do I see in letting fall the sleeve? The cuts and lacerations on your arms show me that you have fought for your country

Galileo I cannot claim that honor Do not look at them My guardian may understand that

Milton Great God! they are the marks of the torture!

Galileo My guardian may understand that likewise Let us converse about something else

Milton Italy! Italy! Italy! drive thy poets into exile into prison, into madness!—spare spare thy one philosopher! What track can the mind pursue in her elevations or her plains or her recesses, without the dogging and prowling of the priesthood?

Galileo They have not done with me yet A few days ago they informed me that I was accused or suspected of disbelieving the existence of devils When I protested that in my opinion there are almost as many devils as there are men and that every wise man is the creator of hundreds at his first appearance,

they told me with much austerity and scornfulness of rebuke, that this opinion is as heretical as the other and that we have no authority from Scripture for believing that the complement exceeded some few legions several of which were thinned and broken by beating up their quarters —thanks chiefly to the Dominicans I bowed as became me for these are worthy masters and their superiors the successors of Peter would burn us for teaching any thing untaught before

Milton They would burn you then for resembling the great apostle himself?

Galileo In what but denying the truth and wearing chains?

Milton Educated with such examples before them literary societies are scarcely more tolerant to the luminaries of imagination than theological societies are to the luminaries of science I myself indeed should hesitate to place Tasso on an equality or nearly on an equality with Ariosto yet since his pen hath been excelled on the Continent by only two in sixteen centuries, he might have expected more favor more forbearance than he found I was shocked at the impudence of his critics in this country their ignorance less surprised me *

Galileo Of yours I am unable to speak

Milton So much the better

Galileo Instead of it you will allow me to express my admiration of what (if I understand any thing) I understand No nation has produced any man except Aristoteles, comparable to either of the Bacons The elder was the more wonderful the later in season was the riper and the greater Neither of them told all he knew or half he thought and each was alike prodigal in giving, and prudent in withholding The learning and genius

Criticism is still very low in Italy Tiraboschi has done little for it nothing can be less exact than his judgments on the poet There is not one remarkable sentence or one happy expression in all his volumes The same may be said of Abbate Cesarotti and of the Signor Calsabigi who wrote on Alfieri There is scarcely a glimpse of poetry in Alfieri yet his verses are tight bracelets and his strokes are an amazing —not indeed to the Signor Calsabigi The Italians are grown more generous to their literary men in proportion as they are grown poorer in them Italy is the only great division of Europe where there never hath existed a Review bearing some authority or credit These things do not greatly serve literature but they rise from it and show it

of Francis led him onward to many things which his nobility and stateliness disallowed Hence was he like the leisurely and rich agriculturist who goeth out a field after dinner well knowing where he the nests and covies and in such idle hour throweth his hat partly over them and they clutter and run and rise and escape from him without his heed to make a louder whirr thereafter, and a longer flight elsewhere

Milton I believe I have discovered no few inaccuracies in his reasoning voluntary or involuntary But I apprehend he committed them designedly and that he wanted in wisdom but the highest —the wisdom of honesty It is comfortable to escape from him and return again to Sorrento and Tasso He should have been hailed as the worthy successor not scrutinized as the presumptuous rival of the happy Ferrarese He was ingenious he was gentle he was brave and what was the reward? Did cities contend for his residence within them? Did princes throw open their palaces at his approach? Did academies send deputations to invite and solicit his attendance? Did senators cast branches of laurel under his horse's hoofs? Did prelates and princes hang tapestries from their windows meet him at the gates and conduct him in triumph to the Capitol? Instead of it his genius was derided his friendship scorned his love rejected he lived despairingly he died broken hearted

Galileo My friend! my friend! you yourself in your language are almost a poet

Milton I may be in time to come

Galileo What! with such an example before your eyes? Rather be a philosopher you may be derided in this too but you will not be broken hearted I am ashamed when I reflect that the worst enemies of Torquato pushing him rudely against Ariosto are to be found in Florence

Milton Be the difference what it may between them your academicians ought to be aware that the lowest of the animals are nearer to the highest of them than these highest are to the lowest of those two For in what greatly more do they benefit the world than the animals do, or how much longer remain in the memory of their species?

Galileo Little very little and the same thing may be easily proved of those whom they praise and venerate My knowledge

of poetry is narrow and having little enthusiasm, I discover faults where beauties escape me I never would venture to say before our Italians what I will confess to you In reading the *Gerusalemme Liberata* I remarked that among the epithets the poet is fondest of *grande* I had remarked that Virgil is fondest of *altus* Now we cannot make any thing greater or higher by clapping these words upon it where the substructure is not sufficiently broad and solid they will not stick The first verses in the *Gerusalemme* for instance are—

Canto le arme pietose e 'l capitano
Che il g*an* sepolcro libero di Cristo

Surely the poet would rather have had a great captain than a great cenotaph

Milton He might have written with a modester and less sonorous exordium —

Canto le rme pieto e e l capitano
Lui h l sepolcro libero di Cristo

Galileo It would not have done for our people, either the unlearned or learned They must have *high gigantic, immense* they must have ebony gold azure they must have honey sugar cinnamon, as regularly in their places as blue-lettered jars full or empty are found in apothecaries shops Dante and Ariosto different as they are equally avoided these sweet viscidities I wish you would help me to exonerate Tasso from the puffy piece of impediment at the beginning of his march

Milton Let us imagine that he considered all Jerusalem as the sepulchre of Christ

Galileo No friend or countryman hath said it for him We will accept it and go on Our best histories excepting Giovio's and Davila's contain no picture no character no passion no eloquence and Giovio is partial and faithless Criticism is more verbose and less logical here than among the French, the Germans and the Dutch

Milton Let us return to Ariosto and Tasso, who, whatever the academicians may gabble in their assemblies, have delighted the most cultivated minds, and will delight them for incalculable ages

Galileo An academician, a dunghill cock and a worm do indeed form a triangle more nearly equilateral than an academician a Lodovico and a Torquato The Dominican is listening yet Behold, he comes in!

Dominican Young gentlemen I did not suspect when you entered that you would ever talk about authors whose writings are prohibited Ariosto is obscene I have heard the same of Tasso, in some part or other

Milton Prythee begone!

Dominican We retire together

Galileo It would be better to leave me if he urges it otherwise I may never expect again the pleasure I have received to day

Dominican Signor Galileo do you talk of pleasure to young persons? Most illustrious signorino the orders of my superior are to reconduct you

Milton Adieu then O too great man!

Galileo For to day adieu!

Dominican (*out of the door*) In my lowly cell O signorino (if your excellency in her inborn gentleness could condescend to favor her humblest slave with her most desired presence) we prepared some light refreshments

Milton Swallow them swallow them thou seemest thirsty I enter but one cell here

Dominican (*aside having bowed respectfully*) Devil! heretic! never shalt thou more!

XXIV ESSEX AND SPENSER[1]

Essex Instantly on hearing of thy arrival from Ireland I sent a message to thee good Edmund, that I might learn from one so judicious and dispassionate as thou art, the real state of

[1 Spenser had served in Ireland as the Secretary to Lord Grey the Deputy and had been rewarded by a large grant of the Desmond property Upon the rebellion of the Earl of Desmond an attack was made upon his house so suddenly that though Spenser himself escaped

things in that distracted country it having pleased the Queen's Majesty to think of appointing me her deputy in order to bring the rebellious to submission

Spenser Wisely and well considered but more worthily of her judgment than her affection May your lordship overcome as you have ever done, the difficulties and dangers you foresee

Essex We grow weak by striking at random and knowing that I must strike and strike heavily I would fain see exactly where the stroke shall fall

Some attribute to the Irish all sorts of excesses others tell us that these are old stories that there is not a more inoffensive race of merry creatures under heaven and that their crimes are all hatched for them here in England by the incubation of printers boys and are brought to market at times of distressing dearth in news From all that I myself have seen of them I can only say that the civilized (I mean the richer and titled) are as susceptible of heat as iron and as impenetrable to light as granite The half-barbarous are probably worse the utterly barbarous may be somewhat better Like game cocks they must spur when they meet One fights because he fights an Englishman another because the fellow he quarrels with comes from a distant county a third because the next parish is an eyesore to him and his first mate is from it. The only thing in which they all agree as proper law is the tooth for tooth act. Luckily we have a bishop who is a native and we call him before the Queen He represented to Her Majesty that every thing in Old Ireland tended to reproduce its kind,—crimes among others and he declared frankly that if an honest man is murdered or what is dearer to an honest man if his honor is wounded in the person of his wife it must be expected that he will retaliate Her Majesty delivered it as her opinion, that the latter case of vindictiveness

one of his children was left behind and perished in the fire He himself returned to England to die soon after and to the Earl of Essex he owed his tomb

(First printed (1834) with The Citation of William Shakespeare Works II 1846 Works V 1876 In the first edition there are certain prefaces and appendices to this Conversation which are only intelligible when read with "The Citation they are not reprinted here)]

was more likely to take effect than the former But the bishop replied, that in his conscience he could not answer for either if the man was up The dean of the same diocese gave us a more favorable report Being a justice of the peace he averred most solemnly that no man ever had complained to him of murder excepting one who had lost so many fore teeth by a cudgel that his deposition could not be taken exactly added to which his head was a little clouded with drunkenness furthermore, that extremely few women had adduced sufficiently clear proofs of violence excepting those who were wilful and resisted with tooth and nail In all which cases it was difficult—nay impossible—to ascertain which violence began first and lasted longest

There is not a nation upon earth that pretends to be so superlatively generous and high minded and there is not one (I speak from experience) so utterly base and venal I have positive proof that the nobility in a mass are agreed to sell for a stipulated sum all their rights and privileges so much per man and the Queen is inclined thereunto But would our Parliament consent to pay money for a cargo of rotten pilchards? And would not our captains be readier to swamp them to import them? The noisiest rogues in that kingdom if not quieted by a halter may be quieted by making them brief collectors and by allowing them first to encourage the incendiary then to denounce and hang him and lastly to collect all the money they can running up and down with the whining ferocity of half starved hyenas under pretence of repairing the damages their exhausted country hath sustained Others ask modestly a few thousands a year and no more from those whom they represent to us as naked and famished and prove clearly to every dispassionate man who hath a single drop of free blood in his veins that at least this pittance is due to them for abandoning their liberal and lucrative professions, and for endangering their valuable lives on the tempestuous seas, in order that the voice of truth may sound for once upon the shores of England, and humanity cast her shadow on the council chamber

I gave a dinner to a party of these fellows a few weeks ago I know not how many kings and princes were among them nor how many poets and prophets and legislators and sages When they were half-drunk, they coaxed and threatened, when they

had gone somewhat deeper they joked, and croaked and hiccoughed, and wept over sweet Ireland and when they could neither stand nor sit any longer they fell upon their knees and their noddles and swore that limbs life, liberty Ireland, and God himself were all at the Queen's service It was only their holy religion the religion of their forefathers—here sobs interrupted some howls others execrations more and the liquor they had ingulfed the rest I looked down on them with stupor and astonishment seeing faces forms, dresses much like ours and recollecting their ignorance levity and ferocity My pages drew them gently by the heels down the steps my grooms set them upright (inasmuch as might be) on their horses and the people in the streets shouting and pelting sent forward the beasts to their straw

Various plans have been laid before us for civilizing or coercing them Among the pacific it was proposed to make an offer to five hundred of the richer Jews in the Hanse towns and in Poland, who should be raised to the dignity of the Irish peerage and endowed with four thousand acres of good forfeited land, on condition of each paying two thousand pounds and of keeping up ten horsemen and twenty foot, Germans or Poles in readiness for service

The Catholics bear nowhere such ill will toward Jews as toward Protestants Brooks make even worse neighbors than oceans do

I myself saw no objection to the measure but our gracious Queen declared she had an insuperable one—*they stank!* We all acknowledged the strength of the argument, and took out our handkerchiefs Lord Burleigh almost fainted and Raleigh wondered how the Emperor Titus could bring up his men against Jerusalem

Ah!' said he looking reverentially at Her Majesty, 'the star of Berenice shone above him! And what evil influence could that star not quell! what malignancy could it not annihilate!

Hereupon he touched the earth with his brow, until the Queen said—

Sir Walter! lift me up those laurels

At which manifestation of princely good will he was ad-

vancing to kiss Her Majesty's hand but she waved it and said sharply,—

Stand there dog!

Now what talk have you for us?

Spenser Interrogate me my lord that I may answer each question distinctly my mind being in sad confusion at what I have seen and undergone

Essex Give me thy account and opinion of these very affairs as thou leftest them for I would rather know one part well than all imperfectly and the violences of which I have heard within the day surpass belief

Why weepest thou my gentle Spenser? Have the rebels sacked thy house?

Spenser They have plundered and utterly destroyed it

Essex I grieve for thee, and will see thee righted

Spenser In this they have little harmed me

Essex How! I have heard it reported that thy grounds are fertile and thy mansion * large and pleasant

Spenser If river and lake and meadow ground and mountain could render any place the abode of pleasantness pleasant was mine indeed!

On the lovely banks of Mulla I found deep contentment Under the dark alders did I muse and meditate Innocent hopes were my gravest cares and my playfullest fancy was with kindly wishes Ah! surely of all cruelties the worst is to extinguish our kindness Mine is gone I love the people and the land no longer My lord ask me not about them I may speak injuriously

Essex Think rather then of thy happier hours and busier occupations these likewise may instruct me

Spenser The first seeds I sowed in the garden ere the old castle was made habitable for my lovely bride were acorns from Penshurst I planted a little oak before my mansion at the birth of each child My sons I said to myself shall often play in the shade of them when I am gone and every year shall they take the measure of their growth as fondly as I take theirs

Essex Well, well but let not this thought make thee weep so bitterly

* It was purchased by a victualler and banker the father or grandfather of Lord Riversdale

Spenser Poison may ooze from beautiful plants deadly grief from dearest reminiscences

I *must* grieve I *must* weep it seems the law of God and the only one that men are not disposed to contravene In the performance of this alone do they effectually aid one another

Essex Spenser! I wish I had at hand my arguments or persuasions of force sufficient to remove thy sorrow but, really I am not in the habit of seeing men grieve at any thing except the loss of favor at court or of a hawk, or of a buck hound And were I to swear out my condolences to a man of thy discernment in the same round roll call phrases we employ with one another upon these occasions I should be guilty not of insincerity but of insolence True grief hath ever something sacred in it and when it visiteth a wise man and a brave one is most holy

Nay kiss not my hand he whom God smiteth hath God with him In his presence what am I?

Spenser Never so great, my lord as at this hour, when you see aright who is greater May he guide your counsels and preserve your life and glory!

Essex Where are thy friends? Are they with thee?

Spenser Ah, where indeed! Generous true hearted Philip! where art thou whose presence was unto me peace and safety, whose smile was contentment, and whose praise renown? My lord! I cannot but think of him among still heavier losses he was my earliest friend and would have taught me wisdom

Essex Pastoral poetry my dear Spenser doth not require tears and lamentations. Dry thine eyes rebuild thine house the Queen and Council I venture to promise thee will make ample amends for every evil thou hast sustained What? does that enforce thee to wail yet louder?

Spenser Pardon me, bear with me most noble heart! I have lost what no Council no Queen no Essex can restore

Essex We will see that There are other swords and other arms to wield them, beside a Leicester's and a Raleigh's. Others can crush their enemies, and serve their friends.

Spenser O my sweet child! And of many so powerful, many so wise and so beneficent, was there none to save thee? None! none!

Essex I now perceive that thou lamentest what almost every father is destined to lament Happiness must be bought although the payment may be delayed Consider the same calamity might have befallen thee here in London Neither the houses of ambassadors nor the palaces of kings, nor the altars of God himself are asylums against death How do I know but under this very roof there may sleep some latent calamity that in an instant shall cover with gloom every inmate of the house, and every far dependent?

Spenser God avert it!

Essex Every day every hour of the year do hundreds mourn what thou mournest

Spenser Oh no no no! Calamities there are around us calamities there are all over the earth calamities there are in all seasons but none in any season none in my place like mine

Essex So say all fathers so say all husbands Look at my old mansion house and let the sun shine as gloriously as it may on the golden vanes or the arms recently quartered over the gateway or the embayed window and on the happy pair that haply is toying at it nevertheless thou mayest say that of a certainty the same fabric hath seen much sorrow within its chambers and heard many wailings and each time this was the heaviest stroke of all Funerals have passed along through the stout hearted knights upon the wainscot and amid the laughing nymphs upon the arras Old servants have shaken their heads as if somebody had deceived them when they found that beauty and nobility could perish

Edmund! the things that are too true pass by us as if they were not true at all and when they have singled us out then only do they strike us Thou and I must go too Perhaps the next year may blow us away with its fallen leaves *

Spenser For you, my lord many years (I trust) are waiting I never shall see those fallen leaves No leaf no bud will spring upon the earth before I sink into her breast for ever

Essex Thou, who art wiser than most men shouldst bear with patience equanimity and courage what is common to all

Spenser Enough enough enough! have all men seen their infant burned to ashes before their eyes?

Essex Gracious God! Merciful Father! what is this?

* It happened so

Spenser Burned alive! burned to ashes! burned to ashes! The flames dart their serpent tongues through the nursery window I cannot quit thee my Elizabeth! I cannot lay down our Edmund! Oh these flames! They persecute they enthrall me they curl round my temples they hiss upon my brain they taunt me with their fierce foul voices they carp at me they wither me they consume me throwing back to me a little of life to roll and suffer in with their fangs upon me Ask me my lord the things you wish to know from me I may answer them, I am now composed again Command me my gracious lord! I would yet serve you soon I shall be unable You have stooped to raise me up you have borne with me you have pitied me even like one not powerful You have brought comfort and will leave it with me for gratitude is comfort

Oh! my memory stands all a tip toe on one burning point when it drops from it then it perishes Spare me ask me nothing let me weep before you in peace —the kindest act of greatness

Essex I should rather have dared to mount into the midst of the conflagration than I now dare entreat thee not to weep The tears that overflow thy heart my Spenser, will staunch and heal it in their sacred stream but not without hope in God

Spenser My hope in God is that I may soon see again what he has taken from me Amid the myriads of angels, there is not one so beautiful and even he (if there be any) who is appointed my guardian could never love me so Ah! these are idle thoughts, vain wanderings distempered dreams If there ever were guardian angels he who so wanted one —my helpless boy—would not have left these arms upon my knees

Essex God help and sustain thee too gentle Spenser! I never will desert thee But what am I? Great they have called me! Alas, how powerless then and infantile is greatness in the presence of calamity!

Come give me thy hand let us walk up and down the gallery Bravely done! I will envy no more a Sidney or a Raleigh

XXV ARCHDEACON HARE AND WALTER LANDOR [1]

Archdeacon Hare In some of your later writings I perceive you have not strictly followed the line you formerly laid down for spelling

Walter Landor I found it inexpedient since whatever the pains I took there was in every sheet almost some deviation on the side of the compositor Inconsistency was forced on me against all my struggles and reclamations At last nothing is left for me but to enter my protest and to take the smooth path instead of the broken up highway

Archdeacon Hare It is chiefly in the preterites and participles that I have followed you perseveringly We are rich in having two for many of our verbs and unwise in corrupting the spelling and thereby rendering the pronunciation difficult We pronounce astonisht we write astonished or 'astonish'd —an unnecessary harshness Never was spoken dropped or lopped or hopped or propped but dropt &c yet with the choice before us we invariably take the wrong I do not resign a right to astonish*ed* or diminish*ed* They may, with many like them be useful in poetry and several such terminations add dignity and solemnity to what we read

[1 The first part of this Conversation is concerned with words and letters But the latter and larger part is extremely interesting It is in part an answer to De Quincey's rather spiteful Note on Walter Savage Landor (Works 1853 vol. i. p. 185) and in part a review who had quoted from that book Landor does not seem to have read De Quincey's attack Had he done so he must have noticed the parallel drawn between himself and Plato Both are unreadable De Quincey both inclined to be voluptuous both had a hankering after purple and fine linen and both delighted to have pain as elaborately upon the secret *art* of a dial gutter as lapidary would upon the cutting of a Sultan's rubies Had Landor read this retort would have been rougher though not less contemptuous Archdeacon Hare is so well known that nothing need be said of him here except that he was a faithful friend to Landor believed in him saw the first edition of the Conversations through the press and printed some in the *Philological Museum* a magazine edited by him at Cambridge (Last Fruit 1853 Works vol. v. 1876)]

in our church,—the sanctuary at once of our faith and of our language

Walter Landor In more essential things than preterites and participles I ought rather to have been your follower than you mine No language is purer or clearer than yours Vigorous streams from the mountain do not mingle at once with the turbid lake, but retain their force and their color in the midst of it We are sapped by an influx of putridity

Archdeacon Hare Come come again to our spelling-book

Walter Landor Well then we differ on the spelling of *honour favour* &c You would retain the *u* I would eject it for the sake of consistency We have dropped it in *author emperor, ambassador* Here again for consistency and complicancy I write 'embassador' because I write as all do, 'embassy I write theater sepulcher, meter in their English form rather than the French The best authors have done it All write hexameter and pentameter

Archdeacon Hare It is well to simplify and systematize wherever we can do it conveniently

Walter Landor And without violence to *vested rights* which words have here some meaning Why *a*mend, if 'emendation' Why not "pontif if 'caitif'

Archdeacon Hare Why then should grandeur be left in solitary state' The Englishman less easily protrudes his nether jaw than the Frenchman, as 'grandeur seems to require Grandour (or grandor, if you will have it so) sounds better

Walter Landor I *will* have it so and so will you and others at last.

Archdeacon Hare Meanwhile, let us untie this last knot of Norman bondage on the common law of language in our land

Walter Landor Set about it no authority is higher than yours I will run by the side of you or be your herald, or (what better becomes me) your pursuivant

There is an affectation of scholarship in compilers of spelling-books and in the authors they follow for examples, when they bring forward *phenomena* and the like They might as well bring forward *mysteria* We have no right to tear Greek and Latin declensions out of their grammars we need no *vortices* when we have *vortexes* before us, and while we have *memorandums, fac*

totums ultimatums let our shepherd dogs bring back to us by the ear such as have wandered from the flock

Archdeacon Hare We have stimul*ant* why stimul*us*? why "stimul*i*? Why recip*e*? why rec*ept*?—we might as reasonably write dec*ept* and conc*ept* I believe we are the only people who keep the *Dramatis Personæ* on the stage or announce their going off by *exeunt* *exit* for *departure* is endurable and kept in countenance by *transit* Let us deprecate the danger of hearing of a friend's *obit* which seems imminent a *post obit* is bad enough An *item* I would confine to the ledger I have no mind for *animus*

Walter Landor Besides these there are two expressions either of which is quite enough to bring down curses and mortality on the poet *Stand conf st* (even if not written conf*ess d*) is one *unbidden tears* the other I can imagine no such nonsense as *unbid den tears* Why do we not write the verb *control* with an *e* at the end and the substantive with *u* as *soul*? We might as reasonably write *whol* for *whole* Very unreasonably do we write *wholly* with a double *l* *wholy* and *soly* might follow the type of *holy* We see printed *bef il* with one *l* but never *fal* and yet in the monosyllable we should not be doubtful of the accentuation It is but of late that we control *ecal* appal we do not yet rol Will any one tell me who put such a lizy beast to our munition train and spelled on the front of the carriage *am*munition? We write *ent r* and *inter* equally with a single final *r* surely the latter wants another

Archdeacon Hare What a quite as censurable while we reject the good of our own countrymen we adopt the bad of the foreigner We are much in the habit of using the word *flilustier* Surely, we might let the French take and torture our *fre booter* In our fondness for making verbs out of substantives we even go to the excess of *flilustering* And now from coarse vulgarity let us turn our eyes towards inconsiderate refinement When I was a boy every girl among the poets was a *nymph* whether in country or town Johnson countenanced them and arm in arm with Pope, followed them even into Jerusalem Ye nymphs of Solyma &c

Walter Landor Pity they ever found their way back!

Archdeacon Hare Few even now object to *muse* and *bard*

Walter Landor Nor would I in their proper places the muse in Greece and Italy the bard on our side of the Alps, up almost as far as Scandinavia quite as far as the Cimbrian Chersonese But the bard looks better at nine or ten centuries off than among gentlemen in roquelaures or paletots Johnson a great reprehender might fairly and justly have reprehended him in the streets of London, whatever were his own excesses among the 'nymphs of Solyma In the midst of his gravity he was not quite impartial and extraordinary as were his intellectual powers he knew about as much of poetry as of geography In one of his letters he talks of Guadaloupe as being in another hemisphere Speaking of that island, his very words are these Whether you return hither or stay in another hemisphere At the commencement of his Satire on the *Vanity of Human Wishes* (a noble specimen of declamation), he places China nearer to us than in Peru

Archdeacon Hare The negligences of Johnson may easily be forgiven, in consideration of the many benefits he has conferred on literature A small poet no great critic he was a strenuous and lofty moralist Your pursuers are of another breed another race They soon tire themselves hang out their tongues and drop along the road Time is not at all misapplied by you in the analysis and valuation of Southey's and Wordsworth's poetry which never has been done scrupulously and correctly But surely gravel may be carted and shot down on the highway without the measure of a Winchester bushel Consider if what you have taken in hand is worthy of your workmanship

Walter Landor The most beautiful tapestry is worked on extremely coarse canvas Open a volume of *Bayle's Biographical Dictionary* and how many just and memorable observations will you find on people of no 'note or likelihood'

Archdeacon Hare Unhappily for us we are insensible of the corruptions that creep yearly into our language At Cambridge or Oxford (I am ignorant which of them claims the glory of the invention), some undergraduate was so facetious as to say, 'Well, while you are *discussing* the question I will *discuss* my wine' The gracefulness of this witticism was so captivating that it took possession not only of both universities but seized also on "men about town" Even the ladies, the vestals who preserve the purity

of language caught up the expression from those who were liber tines in it

Walter Landor Chesterfield and Horace Walpole who are among the most refined of our senators have at present no more authority in language than in dress By what we see we might imagine that the one article is to be cast aside after as short a wear as the other It occurs to me at this moment, that, when we have assumed the habiliments of the vulgar we are in danger of contracting their coarseness of language and demeanor

Archdeacon Hare Certainly the Romans were *togati* in their tongue as well as in their wardrobe Purity and gravity of style were left uncontaminated and unshaken by the breath of Tiberius and his successor The Antonines spoke better Latin than the Triumvir Antonius and Marcus Aurelius although on some occasions he preferred the Greek was studious to maintain his own idiom strong and healthy When the tongue is paralysed the limbs soon follow No nation hath long survived the decrepitude of its language

There is perpetually an accession of slang to our vernacular which is usually biennial or triennial

Walter Landor I have been either a fortunate or a prudent man to have escaped for so many years together to be pitched into among *gigantant* trees *monster* meetings *glorious* fruit *splendid* cigars dogs horses and *bricks* *palmy* days *rich* oddities to owe nobody a farthing for any other fashionable habits of rude device and demi saison texture and above all to have never come in at the *eleventh hour*, which has been sounding all day long the whole year They do me a little injustice who say that such good fortune is attributable to my residence in Italy The fact is I am too cautious and too aged to catch disorders and I walk fearlessly through these epidemics

Archdeacon Hare Simply to *open* is insufficient we open *up* and open *out* A gentleman *indues* a coat it will be difficult to *exue* if he tries he must lie down and sleep in it

Foolery was thought of old sufficiently expressive nothing short of *tom*foolery will do now To *repudiate* was formerly to put away what disgraced us it now signifies (in America at least) to reject the claims of justice and honor We hear people *re-read*, and see them *re write* and are invited to a *spread*,

where we formerly went to a dinner or collation We cut down *barracks* to a single *barrack* but we leave the stocks in good repair We rid among *ambitions* and among *peoples* until Stern hold and Hopkins call us into a quieter place and we hear once again—

All people that on earth do dwell

Shall we never have done with *rule and exception* ‘*ever and anon*, *many a time and oft*

Walter Landor It is to be regretted that Horne Tooke and Bishop Lowth were placed so far apart by many impediments and obstructions that they never could unite in order to preserve the finials and pinnacles of our venerable fabric to stop the innovations and to diminish the anomalies of our language Southey although in his youth during their time might have assisted them for early in life he had studied as sedulously the best of our old authors as they had and his judgment was as mature at twenty-five as theirs at fifty He agreed with me that *mind find kind blind behind*, should have a final *e* in order to signify the sound and that the verb *wind* should likewise for the same reason I brought Fairfax’s *Tasso* with me and showed him that Fairfax had done it and had spelled many other words better than our contemporaries, or even than the most part of his own

Archdeacon Hare There are two expressions of frequent occurrence equally wrong — incorrect *orthography* and ‘vernacular *idiom* Distempers in language, as in body, which rise from the crowded lane, creep up sometimes to where the mansions are higher and better ventilated I think you once remarked to me that you would just as properly write pillagger for pillager, as messenger for messager The more excusable vulgar add to these dainties their *sausenger* Have you found anything more to notice where you have inserted those slips of paper in your Fairfax?

Walter Landor Much to run over all would be tedious. He writes with perfect propriety *dismaid*, *applie chefe*, *hart*, *wisht*, *husht*, *spred* Southey was entirely of my opinion that if *lead* in the present is *led* in the preterite *read* should be *red* There is no danger of mistaking the adjective for the verb by it He ridiculed the spelling of Byron,—*redde* which is quite as ridicu-

lous as the conceit of that antiquarian society which calls itself the Roxburghe Club *e* was never added to *burgh*

Howell a very careful writer an excellent authority writes *forren frend Mahometism young extemporal shipwrack cole onely sutable plaid askt begger apparance brest yeer, land peece treasure scepter uncertain kinde perle*

Drayton and Daniel may be associated with Howell Dray ton in his prose wrote *red* and there is no purer or more con siderate author He writes also ransackt distinguisht dispers worshipt admonisht taxt deckt wrackt profest extold purchas He writes *famed tuch yeers onely dore*

Sir Thomas More writes *lernid clerkness, preste* (priest) *sholde wolde lve yere laste mynde here* (hear) *herer* (hearer) *appere speker sek grevous fynde doute whereof seme dede nede tethe* (teeth) *preclet peple sene* (seen) *eres* (ears) *tok therfor mete* (meat) *frend therin fere* (fear) *a wer redc* (read) A host of these words only show that the best authors avoided the double vowel

Chaucer in consecutive verses writes *were* (wear) and *bere* (bear) and *heven* and *foule*

> Upon her thombe or in her purse to bere
> There is no foule that fliegth under heven

Camden writes *forrunc* and *land*

It was late before *ea* was employed in place of the simple vowel *e* Chaucer writes *ene, pecok* *shal* and *wil* so written by him are more proper than *shall* and *wil* by avoiding the form of substantives Caxton writes as many of his time *werk* not work Tyndal long after writes *doo* for *do* Spenser writes *dore* instead of *door* Sackville writes *pearst* Dryden is less accurate than Cowley and Waller and Spratt Speaking of Cowley he says He never could *forgive* a conceit meaning *forego* In our own age many (Burke among the rest) say "By *this* means It would be affectation to say By this *mean*, in the singular but the proper expression is "By these means

Archdeacon Hare In regard to terminations it is difficult to account for the letter *e* when we say by and by*e* There is none in accounting for it in 'Good *bye* which is the most com

prehensive of all contractions it is Good be with ye!" or God be with ye! which in effect is the same Formerly *ye* was more universal than *you* Ignorant critics reprehend it wrongly in such a position as I would not hurt *ye* But it is equally good English as *Je* would not hurt me No word is more thoroughly vernacular from of old to this present day among the people throughout the land We should keep our homely well seasoned words and never use the grave for light purposes

Among the many we misapply is the word *destiny* We hear of a man controlling the destiny of another Nothing on earth can control the *destined* whether the term be applied strictly or laxly *Element* is another meaning only a *constituent* Graver still is *incarnation* We hear about the *mission* of fellows whose highest could be only to put a letter into the post office

We usually set before *neath* improperly the better spelling is *nethe* whence *nether* We also prefix the same to *fore* We say (at least those who swear do) *fore* God never *before* God *Cause* in like manner is a word of itself no less than *because* But this form is proper for poetry

Chaucer writes *peple* as we pronounce it

Skelton writes *sault* and *mault* also in accordance with the pronunciation and there is exactly the same reason for it as in *fault* It could not be going far out of our way to bring them back again and then cry *hault* which we do only with the pen in hand

We are in the habitude of writing onward*s*, backward*s* toward*s*, afterward*s* he more gracefully drops the final *s* We write strip*t* whip*t* yet hesitate at trip*t* and worship*t* We possess in many cases two for one of the preterites and, to show our impartiality and fairness we pronounce the one and write the other We write *said* and *laid* but never *staid* or *plaid* We write offic*ial* why not influenc*ial* circumstanc*ial* differenc*ial*? We write *entrance* the substantive like *entrance* the verb Shakspeare wisely wrote,—

That sounds the fatal entrance of Duncan &c

Wonderous is a finer word than *wondrous*

It is not every good scholar or every fair poet who possesses

the copiousness and exhibits the discrimination of Shakspeare Even when we take the hand he offers us we are accused of innovating

Walter Landor So far from innovating the words I propose are brought to their former and legitimate station You have sanctioned the greater part and have thought the remainder worth your notice Every intelligent and unprejudiced man will agree with you I prefer high authorities to lower analogy to fashion a *Restoration* to a *Usurpation* Innovators and worse than innovators were those Reformers called who disturbed the market place of manorial theology and went back to religion where she stood alone in her original purity We English were the last people to adopt the reformed style in the calendar and we seem determined to be likewise the last in that of language We are ordered to please the public we are forbidden to instruct it Not only publishers and booksellers are against us but authors too and even some of them who are not regularly in the service of those masters The outcry is *We* have not ventured to alter what we find in use and why should *he*

Archdeacon Hare If the most learned and intelligent in that age which has been thought by many the most glorious in our literature were desirous that the language should be settled and fixed how much more desirable is it that its accretion of corruptions should be now removed! It may be difficult and still more difficult to restore the authority of the ancient dynasty

Walter Landor We never have attempted it But there are certain of their laws and usages which we would not willingly call obsolete Often in the morning I have looked among your books for them and I deposit in your hands the first fruits of my research It is only for such purposes that I sit hours together in a library Either in the sunshine or under the shade of trees I must think meditate and compose

Archdeacon Hare Thoughts may be born in a room above stairs or below but they are stronger and healthier for early exercise in the open air It is not only the conspirator to whom is appropriate the 'modo citus modo tardus incessu' it is equally his who follows fancy and his also who searches after truth

Walter Landor The treasures of your library have some-

times tempted me away from your pictures and I have ceased for a moment to regret that by Selections and Compendiums we had lost a large portion of the most noble works when I find so accurate a selection so weighty a compendium carried about with him who is now walking at my side

Archdeacon Hare I would have strangled such a compliment ere it had attained its full growth however now it is not only full grown but over-grown let me offer you in return not a compliment but a congratulation, on your courage in using the plural compendiums where another would have pronounced compendia

Walter Landor Would that other whoever he may be have said *musea* All I require of people is consistency and rather in the right than in the wrong When we have admitted a Greek or Latin or French word we ought to allow it the right of citizenship and induce it to comply and harmonize with the rest of the vocalic community Pindarique went away with Cowley and died in the same ditch with him but oblique is inflexible and stands its ground He would do well who should shove it away or push it into the ranks of the new militia Antique is the worst portion of Gray's heritage His former friend Horace Walpole had many *antiques* and other trifles at Strawberry hill but none so worthless as this In honest truth, we neither have nor had then a better and purer writer than he although he lived in the time of the purest and best —Goldsmith Sterne, Fielding, and Inchbald He gave up his fashionable French for a richer benefice He would not use *rouge*, but *red* very different from the ladies and gentlemen of the present day who bring in *entremets* and *lardes* casting now and then upon the lukewarm hearth a log of Latin and in the sleeping-room they have prepared for us spread out as counterpane a remnant of Etruscan from under a courier's saddle bag

Chaucer, who had resided long in France, and much among courtiers made English his style Have you patience to read a list of the words he spelled better than we do, and not he only, but his remote successors?

Archdeacon Hare I have patience and more than patience, to read or hear or see whatever is better than ourselves Such investigations have always interested me, you know of old.

Walter Landor Rare quality! I scarcely know where to find another who possesses it, or whose anger would not obtain the mastery over his conscience at the imputation

Let your eyes run down this catalogue Here are *swete* and *swote*, *finde ther wel herken herk gilt* (guilt) *shal don* (done) *werks* (works) *weping clene defaulte therof speking erthe bereth* (beareth) *seat mete* (meat) *shuld* (should) *hevy heavn grevous grete hete yere fode* (food) we still say *fodder* not fooder *ete* (eat) *lede throt wel drede shal gess* (guess) *ful wheras trespas betwene repe slepe shete frend dedly delites teres, hering lereness juge plese speke wold* (would) *ded tred bereve thred peple dore dreme deme reson indede meke, feble wede nede fele cese, pece dedly deme resonable slepe titel refrain preeste*

Archdeacon Hare In adding the vowel he makes it available for verse *Coretise* how much better than *covetiousness*! Among the words which might be brought back again to adorn our poetical diction is *beforne* (before) Here is *distemperment* (for inclemency of season) *forlet* (forgive) another good word so is *wanhope* (despair) Has no poet the courage to step forth and to rescue these maidens of speech unprotected beneath the very castle walls of Chaucer?

Walter Landor If they are resolved to stitch up his rich old tapestry with muslin they would better let it stay where it is

Archdeacon Hare Several more words are remaining in which a single vowel is employed where we reduplicate *Sheres appere speche wele bereth reson mening pleasance stele coles mekeness reve* (bereave) *rore tong corageous forbere kepe othe* (oath) *cese shepe, dreme werse* (worse) *reken* (reckon) Certainly this old spelling is more proper than its substitute To reken is to *look over* an account before casting it up Here are *grevance lerne bete seke, speke freze* (freeze) *chese clense tretise meke* Here I find *axe* (ask which is now a vulgarism, though we use *tax* for *task* With great propriety he writes *persever* we with great impropriety, *persevere* He uses the word *spiced* for *overnice* which in common use is *gingerly* I think you would not be a stickler for the best of these whichever it may be

Walter Landor No, indeed but there are in Chaucer, as there are in other of our old yet somewhat later writers things

which with regret I see cast aside for worse I wish every editor of an author whether in poetry or prose would at least add a glossary of his words as he spelled and wrote them without which attention the history of a language must be incomplete Heme in his Virgil Wakefield in his Lucretius have preserved the text itself as entire as possible Greek words do not appear in their spelling to have been subject to the same vicissitudes as Latin

I have not been engaged in composing a grammar or vocabulary nor is a conversation a treatise so with your usual kindness you will receive a confused collection of words bearing my mark on them and worthy of yours They are somewhat like an Italian pastry of heads and necks and feet and gizzards of a variety of birds of all sorts and sizes If my simile is undignified let me go back into the Sistine Chapel where Michel Angelo displays the same thing more gravely and grandly in his *Last Judgment*

Archdeacon Hare Do not dissemble your admiration of this illustrious man nor turn into ridicule what you reverence Among the hardy and false things caught from mouth to mouth is the apothegm that there is only a step from the sublime to the ridiculous There was indeed but a step from Bonaparte's

Walter Landor I perceive you accept the saying as his It was uttered long before his birth and so far back as the age of Louis the Fourteenth Another is attributed to him which was spoken by Barere in the Convention He there called the English cette nation *boutiquiere*

Archdeacon Hare Well now empty out your sack of words, and never mind which comes first

Walter Landor Probably there are several of them which we have noticed before Here are a few things which I have marked with my pencil from time to time others are obliterated others lost

There is a very good reason why *ravel* and *travel* should be spelled with a single *l* pronunciation requires it Equally does pronunciation equire a double *l* in *befell expell compell*

We often find *kneeled* instead of *knelt* yet I do not remember *feeled* for *felt* Shaftesbury and the best writers of his age and later wrote *could should would* we do not, although in speaking we never insert the *l* Hurd writes '*Under* the *circumstances* Circumstances are *about* us not *above* us

'Master of the situation' is the only expression we have borrowed lately of the Spanish and it is not worth having.

I have observed *rent* as preterite of *rend*—improper as *ment* would be of *mend*.

All too well &c.—the would *all* used needlessly. *All* the greater &c. These expressions are among the many which have latterly been swept out of the servants' hall who often say (no doubt), I am all the better for my dinner.

Daresay is now written as one word.

Egotist should be *egoist*: to *doze* should not be written *dose*: is it often is.

I once was present when a scholar used the words *vexed question*: he was not laughed at although he was thought a pedant for it. Many would willingly be thought pedants who never can be, but they care more cheaply be thought affected as they would be if they assumed this Latinism. In our English sense, many a question vexes: none is vexed. The sea is *vexatum* when it is tossed hither and thither to and fro: but a question however unsettled has never been so called in good English.

Sought his bedchamber improper because he knew where it was. To *seek* is to go after what may or may not be found. *Fustily* is not English. To *gather* a rose is improper. To gather *two* roses would be proper. Better to *cull* which may be said of choosing one out of several. *Cull* is from the Italian *cogliere* originally in Latin *colligere*. But to us in our vernacular the root is invisible: not so to *gather* of which we are reminded by *together*.

There is a bull of the largest Irish breed in nearly the most beautiful of Wordsworth's poems:—

> I liv'd upon what casual bounty yield
> Now coldly given
> *Pittly scanty*

The Irish need not cry out for their potatoes if they can live upon what they cannot get.

> The child is father of the man

says Wordsworth well and truly. The verse animadverted on must have been written before the boy had begotten his parent.

What can be sillier than those verses of his which many have quoted with unsuspicious admiration?—

A maid whom there was none to praise
And very few to love

He might have written more properly if the rhyme and metre had allowed it —

A maid whom there were none to love
And very few to praise

For surely the few who loved her would praise her Here he makes love subordinate to praise there were some who loved her none (even of these) who praised her Readers of poetry hear the bells and seldom mind what they are ringing for Where there is laxity there is inexactness

Frequently there are solid knolls in the midst of Wordsworth's morass but never did I expect to find so much animation such vigor, such succinctness, as in the paragraph beginning with—

All degrees and shapes of spurious form

and ending with—

Left to herself unheard of and unknown

Here indeed the wagoner's frock drops off and shows to our surprise the imperial purple underneath it Here is the brevity and boldness of Cowper here is heart and soul here is the ἀκων βασιλικη of poetry

I believe there are few if any who enjoy more heartily than I do the best poetry of my contemporaries or who have commended them both in private and in public with less parsimony and reserve Several of them as you know, are personally my friends, although we seldom meet Perhaps in some I may desiderate the pure ideal of what is simply great If we must not always look up at Theseus and the Amazons, we may however catch more frequent glimpses of the Graces with their zones on and their zones only Amplification and diffuseness are the principal faults of those who are now standing the most prominent Dilution does not always make a thing the clearer it may even cause turbidity

Archdeacon Hare Stiffness is as bad as laxness. Pindar and

Horace Milton and Shakspeare never caught the cramp in their mountain streams their movements are as easy as they are vigorous

Walter Landor The strongest are the least subject to stiffness Diffuseness is often the weakness of vanity The vain poet is of opinion that nothing of his can be too much he sends to you basketful after basketful of juiceless fruit covered with scentless flowers

Archdeacon Hare Many an unlucky one is like the big and bouncing foot ball which is blown up in its cover by unseemly puffing and serves only for the game of the day I am half inclined to take you to task my dear friend feeling confident and certain that I should do it without offence

Walter Landor Without offence but not without instruction Here I am ready at the desk with both hands down

Archdeacon Hare To be serious Are you quite satisfied that you never have sought a pleasure in detecting and exposing the faults of authors even good ones

Walter Landor I have here and there sought that pleasure and found it To discover a truth and to separate it from a falsehood is surely an occupation worthy of the best intellect and not at all unworthy of the best heart Consider how few of our countrymen have done it or attempted it on works of criticism how few of them have analysed and compared Without these two processes there can be no sound judgment on any production of genius We are accustomed to see the bewigged limb up into the judge's chair to hear him begin with mock gravity and to find him soon dropping it for his natural banter He condemns with the black cap on but we discover through its many holes and dissutures the uncombed wig Southey is the first and almost the only one of our critics who moves between his intellect and his conscience close to each

Archdeacon Hare How much better would it be if our reviewers and magazine men would analyze in this manner to the extent of their abilities and would weigh evidence before they pass sentence But they appear to think that unless they hazard much, they can win little while in fact they hazard and lose a great deal more than there is any possibility of their recovering One rash decision ruins the judge's credit, which twenty correcter

never can restore. Animosity or perhaps something more ignoble usually stimulates rampant inferiority against high desert.

I have never found you disconcerted by any injustice toward yourself,—not even by the assailants of this our Reformation.

Walter Landor. If we know a minor whose guardians and trustees have been robbing him of his patrimony or misapplying it or wearing out the land by bad tillage, would we not attempt to recover for him whatever we could; and especially if we were intimate with the family if we had enjoyed the shade of its venerable woods the refreshing breezes from its winding streams and had in our early days taken our walks among them for study, and in our still earlier gone into the depths of its forests for our recreation?

Archdeacon Hare. Next in criminality to him who violates the laws of his country is he who violates the language. In this he is a true patriot and somewhat beside. —

Qui consulta patrum qui leges juraque cernat

Byron is among the defaulters. On Napoleon he says I like *he* of Babylon. The *annals* of Gibbon. I have *eaten* &c. There is a passage in Tacitus on a vain poet Lucterius remarkably applicable to our lately fashionable one. Studia illa ut plena vecordiæ, ita inania et fluxa sunt nec quidquam grave ac serium ex eo metuas qui suorum ipse flagitiorum proditor non virorum animis sed muliercularum adrepit.

Walter Landor. It suits him perfectly. I would however pardon him some false grammar and some false sentiment for his vigorous application of the scourge to the two monsters of dissimilar configuration who degraded and disgraced at the same period, the two most illustrious nations in the world. The Ode against Napoleon is full of animation against the other there is less of it for animation is incompatible with nausea. Byron had good action but he tired by fretting, and tossing his head, and rearing.

Archdeacon Hare. Let reflections for a moment give way to recollections. In the morning we were interrupted in some observations on the aspirate.

Walter Landor. Either I said, or was about to say, that

the aspirate wherever it is written should be pronounced If we say *a* house why not say *a* hour if *a* horse why not 'a honor' Nobody says *an* heavy load *an* heavenly joy *an* holy man *an* hermit *an* high place *an* huge monster *an* holly bough *an* happy day Let the minority yield here to the majority Our capriciousness in admitting or rejecting the service of the aspirate was contracted from the French The Italians not wanting it sent it off and called it back merely for a mark discriminatory for instance in the verb *Ho hai ha*

Archdeacon Hare You have been accused of *phonetic* spelling

Walter Landor Inconsiderately and with even less foundation than falsehood has usually under it Nothing seems to me more glossly absurd or more injurious to an ancient family —the stem of our words and thoughts Such a scheme about fourscore years ago was propounded by Elphinstone it has lately been reproduced only to wither and die down again

Archdeacon Hare I always knew and from yourself that you are a good hater of innovation and that your efforts were made strenuously on the opposite side attempting to recover in our blurred palimpsests what was written there of old We have dropped a great deal of what is good as you just now have shown and we have taken into our employment servants without a character or with a worthless one We adorn our new curtains with faded fringe and embellish stout buckskin with point lace

Walter Landor After this conversation if it ever should reach the public ear I may be taken up for a brawl in the street,—more serious than an attack on the new grammar school

Archdeacon Hare What can you mean? Taken up? For a brawl?

Walter Landor Little are you aware that I have lately been accused of a grave offence and one committed in the dark

Archdeacon Hare And in the dark you leave me Pray explain

Walter Landor I am indicted for perpetrating an *Epic*

Archdeacon Hare Indeed! I am glad to hear the announcement. And when does the cause come into court? And who is the accuser? And what are his grounds?

Walter Landor Longer ago by some years than half a century I wrote *Gebir* The cause and circumstances I have detailed elsewhere

Archdeacon Hare Is this the epic?

Walter Landor It appears so

Archdeacon Hare Already you look triumphant from that ancient car

Walter Landor No truly I am too idle for a triumph and the enemy's forces were so small that none could legitimately be decreed

> Exoriare aliquis nostris ex ossibus ultor
> Qui facibus barbaricos calamoque equar colonos
>
> Surely shall some one come alert and kind
> With torch and quill to guide the blundering hind

Archdeacon Hare Clowns and boys and other idlers if they see a head above a garden-wall are apt to throw a pebble at it which mischief they abstain from doing when the head is on their level and near

Walter Landor Nobody reads this poem I am told and nothing more likely

Archdeacon Hare Be that as it may the most disappointed of its readers would be the reader who expected to find an epic in it. To the *epic* not only its certain spirit but its certain form is requisite, and not only in the main body but likewise in the minute articulations I do not call *epic* that which is in lyric metre, nor indeed in any species of rhyme The cap and bells should never surmount the helmet and breastplate Ariosto and Tasso are lyrical romancers. Your poem, which Southey tells us he took for a model is in blank verse

Walter Landor Southey whom I never had known or corresponded with, hailed it loudly in the *Critical Review* on its first appearance He recommended it to Charles Wynne, Charles Wynne to the Hebers they, to your uncle Shipley Dean of St Asaph's Southey's splendid criticism whatever

may be the defects and deficiences of the poem must have attracted at the time some other readers yet I believe (though I never heard or inquired) that they were not numerous Frere Canning and Bobus Smith were among them Enough for me

Within these few months a wholesale dealer in the brittle crockery of market criticism has picked up some shards of it and stuck them in his shelves Among them is my *Sea Shell* which Wordsworth clapped into his pouch There it became incrusted with a compost of mucus and shingle there it lost its pearly hue within and its memory of where it had abided

Archdeacon Hare But Wordsworth had the industry and skill to turn every thing to some account

Walter Landor Perfectly true And he is indebted to me for more than the value of twenty *Shells* he is indebted to me for praise if not more profuse yet surely more discriminating than of those critics who were collected at wakes and hired by party Such hospital nurses kill some children by starving and others by pampering with unwholesome food

Archdeacon Hare I have often heard you express your admiration of Wordsworth and I never heard you complain or notice that he owed any thing to you

Walter Landor Truly he owes me little My shell may be among the prettiest on his mantelpiece but a trifle it is at best I often wish in his longest poem he had obtained in inclosure act, and subdivided it What a number of delightful idyls it would have afforded! It is pity that a vapor of metaphysics should overhang and chill any portion of so beautiful a plain of which however the turf would be finer and the herbage solider for a moderate expenditure in draining and top dressing

Archdeacon Hare Your predilections led you to rank Southey higher

Walter Landor Wordsworth has not written three poems so excellent as *Thalaba* the *Curse of Kehama* and *Roderic* nor indeed any poem exhibiting so great a variety of powers Southey had abundance of wit and humor of which Wordsworth like greater men —such, for instance as Goethe and Milton— was destitute The present age will easily pardon me for placing here the German and the Englishman together the future I

sadly fear, would without some apology be inexorable If Wordsworth wants the diversity and invention of Southey no less than the humor he wants also the same generality belonging in the same degree to Cowper with terseness and succinctness

Archdeacon Hare You have often extolled and in the presence of many the beauty of his rural scenes and the truth of his rural characters

Walter Landor And never will I forego an opportunity In the delineation of such scenes and characters far infinitely far beneath him are Virgil and Theocritus Yet surely it is an act of grievous cruelty however unintentional in those who thrust him into the same rank and file with Milton He wants muscle breadth of shoulder and height

Archdeacon Hare Sometimes he may be prosaic

Walter Landor He slithers on the soft mud, and cannot stop himself until he comes down In his poetry there is as much of prose as there is of poetry in the prose of Milton But prose on certain occasions can bear a great deal of poetry on the other hand poetry sinks and swoons under a moderate weight of prose and neither fan nor burned feather can bring her to herself again

It is becoming and decorous that due honors be paid to Wordsworth undue have injured him Discriminating praise mingled with calm censure is more beneficial than lavish praise without it Respect him reverence him abstain from worshipping him Remember no ashes are lighter than those of incense and few things burn out sooner

Archdeacon Hare It appears that you yourself of late, have not suffered materially by the wafting of the thurible

Walter Landor Faith! I had quite forgotten what we were speaking about last

It was about myself I suspect and the worthy at Edinburgh who *reviews* me According to him it appears that only two had read *Gebir*—namely Southey and Mr De Quincey I have mentioned a few others I might have added Coleridge, to whom Southey lent it, and who praised it even more enthusiastically, until he once found Southey reciting a part of it in company, after which I am told he never mentioned it or slightly In the year of its publication, Carey translator of Dante,

had praised it His opinion of it I keep to myself as one among the few which I value This was long before Mr De Quincey knew Southey It is marvellous that a man of so retentive a memory as Southey should have forgotten a thing to which he himself had given its importance it is less so that Mr De Quincey imagined it under the influence of that narcotic the effects of which he so ingenuously and so well described before he exhibited this illustration

He had another *imaginary conversation* with Southey in which they agree that *Gebir* very much resembled the *Argonautics* of Valerius Flaccus Hearing of this about a twelvemonth ago I attempted to read that poem but was unsuccessful Long before and when my will was stronger I foundered in the midst of Statius Happily in my school days I had mastered Lucan and Juvenal

Archdeacon Hare They are grandly declamatory but declamation overlays and strangles poetry and disfigures even virtue

Walter Landor Reserving the two mentioned and Mutual I doubt whether the most speculative magazine man would hazard five pounds for the same quantity of *English* poetry (rightly called *dull as press*) as all the other post Ovidian poets have left behind After the banishment of Ovid hardly a breath of pure poetry breathed over the *Campagna di Roma* Declamation was pouted in flood gate vers Juvenal and Lucan are high in that school in which at the close of the poetical day was heard the street cow horn of Statius

Archdeacon Hare Even for the company of such as these I think I would have left the Reeker in *Auld Reekie* Flies are only the more troublesome and importunate for being driven off and they will keep up with your horse however hard you ride without any speed or potency of their own

Walter Landor True but people who sell unsound ware and use false scales and measure ought to be pointed out and put down although we ourselves may be rich enough to lose an ounce or two by their filching

Archdeacon Hare No one ever falls among a crowd of literary men without repenting of it sooner or later You may encounter a single hound outside the kennel but there is danger if you enter in among them even with a kind intention and a bland countenance

Walter Landor It must be a dog in the distemper that raises up his spine at me I have spoken favorably of many an author undeservedly, of none therefore both at home and abroad I have received honorary visits from my countrymen and from foreigners

Archdeacon Hare Possibly there may be some of them incontinent of the acrimonious humor prickin, them in the paroxysm of wit I know not whether there be any indication of it in the soil under your shovel Grains of wit however may sometimes be found in petulance as grains of gold in quartz but petulance is not wit nor quartz gold

Are you aware how much thought you have here been throwing away?

Walter Landor My dear friend! thought is never thrown away wherever it falls or runs or rests it fertilizes I speak not of that thought which has evil in it or which tends to evil but of that which is the exercise of intellect on the elevated and healthy training ground of truth We descend and as we descend we may strike off the head of a thistle or blow away the wandering seed of a dandelion which comes against the face but in a moment forgetting them totally we carry home with us freshness and strength

Archdeacon Hare I have never known you, at any former time take much trouble about your literary concerns

Walter Landor Never have I descended to repel an attack, and never will but I must defend the understanding and consistency of a wiser and better man in Southey Never have I feared that a little and loose petard would burst or unhinge the gates of my fortress or that a light culverin at a vast distance below would dismantle or reach the battlements

Archdeacon Hare It is dangerous to break into a park where the paling is high for it may be difficult to find the way out again or to escape the penalty of transgression You never before spoke a syllable about your *Shell*

Walter Landor The swallow builds her nest under a Doric architrave, but does not build it of the same materials

Archdeacon Hare It is amusing to observe the off hand facility and intrepid assurance with which small writers attack the greater as small birds do, pursuing them the more vociferously the higher the flight Milton stooped and struck down two or three of these

obstreperous chatterers of which the feathers he scattered are all that remains and these are curiosities

It is moroseness to scowl at the levity of impudence it is affability, not without wisdom to be amused by it Graver men critics of note have seen very indistinctly where the sun has been too bright for them Gifford the translator of Juvenal who was often so grave that ordinary people took him for judicious thought wit the better part of Shakspeare and in which alone he was superior to his contemporaries Another finds him sadly deficient in his female characters Johnson's ear was insensible to Milton's dispason and in his Life of Somervile he says —

If blank verse be not turnid and gorgeous it is crippled prose

Walter Landor Johnson had somewhat of the medlar in his nature one side hard and austere the other side unsound We call him *affected* for his turgidity this was not affected it was the most natural part of him He hated both affectation and tameness

Archdeacon Hare Two things intolerable whether in prose or poetry Wordsworth is guiltless at least of affectation

Walter Landor True but he often is as prime as an abbess's cat which in kittenhood has undergone the same operation as the Holy Father's choristers

Archdeacon Hare Sometimes indeed he might be more succinct A belt is good for the breath and without it we fail in the long run And yet a man will always be more looked at whose dress flutters in the air than he whose dress sits tight upon him but he will soon be left on the roadside Wherever there is a word beyond what is requisite to express the meaning that word must be peculiarly beautiful in itself or strikingly harmonious either of which qualities may be of some service in fixing the attention and enforcing the sentiment But the proper word in the proper place seldom leaves any thing to be desiderated on the score of harmony The beauty of health and strength is more attractive and impressive than any beauty conferred by ornament I know the delight you feel not only in Milton's immortal verse, but (although less) in Wordsworth's.

Walter Landor A Mozart to a Handel! But who is not charmed by the melody of Mozart? Critics have their favorites

and like the same rank of people at elections they chair one candidate and pelt another

Archdeacon Hare A smaller object may be so placed before a greater as to intercept the view of it in its just proportions This is the favorite manœuvre in the Review field Fierce malignity is growing out of date Nothing but fairness is spoken of regret at the exposure of faults real or imaginary has taken the place of derision sarcasm and arrogant condemnation Nothing was wanting to Byron's consistency when he had expressed his contempt of Shakspeare

Walter Landor Giffords who sniffed at the unsavory skirts of Juvenal and took delight in paddling among the bubbles of vote no longer ply the trade of critics to the same advantage Generosity in truth or semblance is expected and required Chattertons may die in poverty and despair but Keatse are exposed no longer to a lingering death under that poison which paralyzes the heart —contempt.

Archdeacon Hare In youth the appetite for fame is strongest It is cruel and inhuman to withhold the sustenance which is necessary to the growth if not the existence of genius — sympathy encouragement commendation Praise is not fame but the praise of the intelligent is its precursor *Vaticide* is no crime in the statute book but a crime and a heavy crime it is and the rescue of a poet from a murderous enemy although there is no oaken crown decreed for it is among the highest virtues

Walter Landor Many will pass by many will take the other side many will cherish the less deserving but some one considerate and compassionate will raise up the neglected and, where a strong hand does it, several less strong will presently be ready to help Alas! not always There is nothing in the ruins of Rome which throws so chilling a shadow over the heart as the monument of Keats

Our field of poetry at the present time is both wider and better cultivated than it has ever been But if the tyrant of old who walked into the growing corn to inculcate a lesson of *order* by striking off the heads of the higher poppies were to enter ours he would lay aside his stick, so nearly on a level is the crop Every year there is more good poetry written now, in

this our country than was written between the *Metamorphoses* and the *Divina Commedia*. We walk no longer in the cast off clothes of the ancients often ill sewn at first and now ill fitting. We have pulpier flesh stouter limbs we take longer walks explore wider fields and surmount more craggy and more lofty eminences. From these let us take a leisurely look at Fancy and Imagination. Your friend Wordsworth was induced to divide his minor poems under the separate heads of these two probably at the suggestion of Coleridge who persuaded him as he himself told me to adopt the name of *Lyrical Ballads*. He was sorry he said that he took the advice. And well he might be, for *lyre* and *ballad* belong not to the same age or the same people. It would have puzzled Coleridge to have drawn a straight boundary line between the domains of Fancy and those of Imagination on a careful survey of these pieces or perhaps to have given a satisfactory definition of their qualities.

Archdeacon Hare. Do you believe you yourself can?

Walter Landor. I doubt it. The face is not the same but the resemblance is sisterly and even by the oldest friends and intimates of the family one is often taken for the other so nearly are they alike. Fancy is Imagination in her youth and adolescence. Fancy is always excursive. Imagination not seldom is sedate. It is the business of Imagination, in her maturity to create and animate such beings as are worthy of her plastic hand certainly not by invisible wires to put marionettes in motion nor to pin butterflies on blotting paper. Vigorous thought elevated sentiment just expression development of character power to bring man out from the secret haunts of his soul and to place him in strong outline against the sky belong to Imagination. Fancy is thought to dwell among the Fairies and their congeners and they frequently lead the weak and ductile poet further astray. He is fond of playing at *little go* among them and when he grows bolder he acts among the Witches and other such creatures but his hankering after the Fairies still continues. Their tiny rings in which the intelligent see only the growth of fungus are no arena for action and passion. It was not in these circles that Homer and Æschylus and Dante strove.

Archdeacon Hare.—But Shakespeare sometimes entered them, who, with infinitely greater power, moulded his composite and

consistent man breathing into him an immortality never to be forfeited

Walter Landor Shakespeare's full strength and activity were exerted on Macbeth and Othello he trifled with Ariel and Titania he played with Caliban but no other would have thought of playing with him any more than of playing with Cerberus Shakespeare and Milton and Chaucer have more imagination than any of those to whom the quality is peculiarly attributed It is not inconsistent with vigor and gravity There may be a large and effuse light without—

The mot that people the sunbeams

Imagination follows the steps of Homer throughout the Troad from the ships on the strand to Priam and Helen on the city wall Imagination played with the baby Astyanax at the departure of Hector from Andromache and was present at the noblest scene of the *Iliad* where to repeat a verse of Cowper's on Achilles more beautiful than Homer's own —

His hand he placed
On the old man hand *Ἐπὶ δὲ τῷγε χεῖρα τίθει*

No less potently does Imagination urge Æschylus on, from the range of beacons to the birth of Agamemnon nor expand less potently the vulture's wing over the lacerated bosom on the rocks of Caucasus With the earliest flowers of the freshly created earth Imagination strewed the nuptial couch of Eve Not Ariel nor Caliban, nor Witches who ruled the elements but Eve and Satan and Prometheus are the most wondrous and the most glorious of her works Imagination takes the weaker hand of Virgil out of Dante's who grasps it, and guides the Florentine exile through the triple world

Archdeacon Hare Whatever be your enthusiasm for the great old masters you must often feel if less of so strong an impulse, yet a cordial self congratulation in having bestowed so many eulogies on poetical contemporaries and on others whose genius is apart from poetry

Walter Landor Indeed I do Every meed of Justice is delivered out of her own full scale The poets and others who may rank with them,—indeed, all the great men,—have borne

towards me somewhat more than civility The few rudenesses I have ever heard of me from such as neither I nor you ever meet in society and such as warm their fingers and stomachs round less ornamental hearths

When they to whom we have been unknown or indifferent begin to speak a little well of us we are sure to find some honest old friend ready to turn the balance I have had occasion to smile at this

Archdeacon Hare We sometimes stumble upon sly invidiousness and smouldering malignity quite unexpectedly and in places which we should have believed were above the influence of such malaria When Prosperity pays to Wisdom her visit in state would we not rather than halloo the yard dog against her clear the way for her and adorn the door with garlands How fond are people in general of clinging to a great man's foibles!—they can climb no higher It is not the solid it is the curious that grubs feed upon

Walter Landor The practice of barring out the master is still continued in the world's great school room Our sturdy boys do not fear a flogging they fear only a book or a lecture

Archdeacon Hare Authors are like cattle going to a fair those of the same field can never move on without butting one another

Walter Landor It has been my fortune and felicity from my earliest days to have avoided all competitions My tutor at Oxford could never persuade me to write a piece of Latin poetry for the prize earnest as he was that his pupil should be a winner at the forthcoming *Encænia* Poetry was always my amusement prose my study and business I have published five volumes of *Imaginary Conversations* cut the worst of them through the middle and there will remain in this decimal fraction quite enough to satisfy my appetite for fame I shall dine late but the dining room will be well lighted the guests few and select

In this age of discovery it may haply be discovered who first among our Cisalpine nations led Greek to converse like Greek Roman like Roman, in poetry or prose Gentlemen of fashion have patronized them occasionally —have taken them under the arm, have recommended their own tailor their own perfumer

and have lighted a cigar for them from their own at the door of the *Traveller's* or *Athenæum* there they parted

Archdeacon Hare Before we go into the house again let me revert to what you seem to have forgotten —the hasty and inaccurate remarks on *Gebir*

Walter Landor It is hardly worth our while Evidently they were written by a very young person who with a little encouragement and induced to place his confidence in somewhat safer investment than in himself may presently do better things

Archdeacon Hare Southey too I remember calls the poem in some parts obscure

Walter Landor It must be if Southey found it so I never thought of asking him where lies the obscurity I would have attempted to correct whatever he disapproved

Archdeacon Hare He himself the clearest of writers professes that he imitated your versification and the style of his *Colloquies* is in some degree modified by yours

Walter Landor Little cause had he for preferring any other to his own

Perhaps the *indictum ore alio* is my obscurity Goethe is acknowledged by his highest admirers to be obscure in several places which he thinks a poet may and should be occasionally I differ from him and would avoid it everywhere he could see in the dark This great poet carries it with him so far as into *epigram* I now regret that I profited so little by the calm acuteness of Southey In what poet of the last nineteen centuries who has written so much is there less intermixture of prose or less contamination of conceit? In what critic who has criticised so many less of severity or assumption?

I would never fly for shelter under the strongest wing but you know that commentators age after age have found obscurities in Pindar in Dante and in Shakespeare

Archdeacon Hare And it is not in every place the effect of time You have been accused I hear either by this writer or some such another of *turgidity*

Walter Landor Certainly by this do not imagine there is anywhere such another

Archdeacon Hare Without a compliment no poet of ours is less turgid Guests may dispense with pottage and puff paste,

with radishes and water cresses with salad and cream cheese who implentur veteris bacchi pinguisque ferinæ

Walter Landor Encouraged by your commendation let me read to you (for I think I placed it this evening in my pocket) what was transcribed for me as a curiosity out of the same *Iliad* Yes here it is —

His great heart was at variance full of resentment implacable settled in the subject matter and a faithful avenger of killing and injury in the treatment of prisoners of war the chief was of the race of Tydeus and Menelaus with whom in council he was formerly intimate but with Agamemnon never reasonably well satisfied

Archdeacon Hare Opinion on most matters but chiefly on literary and still above on poetical seems to me like an empty cockleshell in a duck pond turned on its stern point with the slightest breath of air it one moment the cracked side next to sight it another the sounder but the emptiness at all times visible

Is your instructor a brother poet

Walter Landor An incipient one he may be Poets in that stage of existence subject to sad maladies kick hard for life and scratch the nurse's face Like some trees — fir trees for instance — they must attain a certain height and girth before they are serviceable or sightly

Archdeacon Hare The weakest wines fall soonest into the acetous fermentation the more generous return their sweetness with their strength Somewhat of this diversity is observable in smaller wits and greater more especially in the warm climate where poetry is the cultivation

Walter Landor The ancients often hung their trophies on obtruncated and rotten trees we may do the like at present leaving our enemies for sepulture

Archdeacon Hare Envy of pre eminence is universal and everlasting Little men whenever they find an opportunity follow the steps of greater in this dark declivity The apple of discord was full grown soon after the creation It fell between the two first brothers in the garden of Eden it fell between two later on the plain of Thebes Narrow was the interval when it alone gleamed portentously on the short grass of Ida It rolled into the palace of Pella dividing Philip and Philip's godlike son,

it followed that insatiable youth to the extremities of his conquests and even to his sepulchre then it broke the invincible phalanx and scattered the captains wide apart It lay in the gates of Carthage so that they could not close against the enemy it lay between the generous and ignate families of Scipio and Gracchus Marius and Sulla Julius and Pompeius Octavius and Antonius were not the last who experienced it fatal malignity King imprisoned king emperor stabbed emperor pope poisoned pope contending for God's vicegerency The roll call of their names with a cross against each is rotting in the lumber room of history Do not wonder then if one of the rabble runs after you from the hustings and committing no worse mischief snatches at the colors in your hatband

Walter Landor Others have snatched more My quarry lies upon a high common a good way from the public road and every body takes out of it what he pleases with privy paw and nothing said beyond *A curse on the old fellow! how hard his granite is! one can never make it fit* This is all I get of quitrent or acknowledgment I know of a poacher who noosed a rabbit on my warren and I am told he made such a fricassee of it that there was no taste of rabbit or sauce I never had him taken up he is at large dressed in new clothes and worth money

Archdeacon Hare Your manors are extensive comprehending—

> Prata arva sylvas altaque paludes
> Usque ad occasum

Walter Landor I never drive the poor away if they come after dry sticks only, but they must not with impunity lop or burn my plantations

Archdeacon Hare I regret that your correspondent was sickened or tired of transcribing

Walter Landor Here is another slip from the same crab tree It is objected that most of my poems are occasional

Archdeacon Hare In number they may be, but in quantity of material I doubt whether they constitute a seventh We will look presently and we shall find perhaps that the gentleman is unlucky at his game of hazard

Walter Landor Certainly his play is not deep We who are sober dare not sit down at a table where character may be lost at

a cast they alone are so courageous who have nothing to be seized on

Archdeacon Hare The gentleman sweeps the cloth with little caution and less calculation Of your poems the smaller alone are occasional now not only are the smaller but the best of Catullus and Horace and all of Pindar Were not the speeches of Lysias, Æschines Demosthenes occasional? Draw nearer home what but occasional were the *Letters of Junius*? *Materiem superabat opus*

Walter Landor True The ministers and their king are now mould and worms they were little better when above ground but the big wig and point lace of *Junius* are suspended aloft upon a golden peg for curiosity and admiration

Archdeacon Hare Regarding the occasional in poetry is there less merit in taking and treating what is before us than in seeking and wandering through an open field as we would for mushrooms?

Walter Landor I stand out a rude rock in the middle of a river with no exotic or parasitical plant on it and few others Eddies and dimples and froth and bubbles pass rapidly by without shaking me Here indeed is little room for picnic and polka

Archdeacon Hare Praise and censure are received by you with nearly the same indifference

Walter Landor Not yours Praise on poetry said to be the most exhilarating of all affects my brain but little Certainly I never attempted to snatch 'the peculiar graces so generally delightful My rusticity has at least thus much of modesty in it

Archdeacon Hare

> The richest flower has not most honey cell
> Young children find the best all with the rose
> Often the little eating into it
> The cleverly attracts the busy hum
> Than the minute and pronounced bloom of box
> Do not know this Natures invited guests
> Draw near and not it down and ponder it
> The idlers revisit us unlookedingly
> Unheedingly the rifler of the hive

Is your critic wiser more experienced and of a more poetical mind than Southey? *Utri horum credidit Quirites*

Vanity and presumption are not always the worst parts of the man they take possession of although they are usually the most prominent Malignity sticks as closely to him and keeps more cautiously out of sight Sorry I have often been to see a fellow Christian — one of much intellect and much worth one charitable to the poor one attendant on the sick, one compassionate with the sufferer one who never is excited to anger but by another's wrongs — enjoying a secret pleasure in lying unpleasant things at no call of duty inflicting wounds which may be long before they heal and not only to those who are unfriendly or unknown but likewise to the nearest and the friendliest Meanwhile those who perhaps are less observant of our ritual not only abstain from so sinful an indulgence but appear to be guided in their demeanor by the less imperative and less authoritative dictate of philosophy I need not exhort or advise you who have always done it to disregard the insignificant and obscure so distant from you so incapable of approaching you Only look before you at this instant and receive a lesson from Nature who is able and ready at all times to teach us and to teach men wiser than we are Unwholesome exhalations creep over the low marshes of Pevensey but they ascend not to Beachyhead nor to Hurstmonceaux

URNBULL A D SELLARS E N BU R H I INBURGH